

*Man at the Crossroads, Looking with Hope and High Vision to a New and Better Future*

by

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B.F.A., Digital Media  
San Francisco Art Institute, 2003

Submitted to the Department of Architecture in  
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Science in Visual Studies

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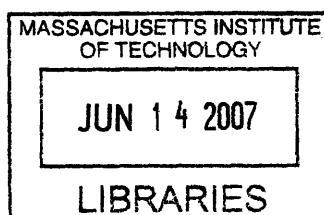
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**ABSTRACT**

I am an artist. My work is doing the research, bringing together perspectives, ideas, people and expressing something that will be silent if I do not say. 73 years ago an artist, Diego Rivera, was trying to say something and he was abruptly interrupted, perhaps the story is not finished. Because of past work, my experiences in California and my exposure to Rivera I have become fascinated with so many issues behind his art, behind the murals.

The thesis is a contemporary reawakening of a landmark moment in art history where Nelson Rockefeller covered and destroyed a Diego Rivera mural. This project is very serious as it opens up issues that started during Rivera's time and we may think are over today after the collapse of the Soviet Union. During the 1930's Rivera, descended upon the United States with a vision of using modern technology as an expression of man and machine as having a fundamental role in effecting the social, economic and political climate of the era.

It seems to be very clear that the circumstances that led Rivera to produce the unfinished mural are still very much alive. In Latin American new leaders are proposing alternatives to America's capitalist system. In Mexico, Subcomandante Marcos, is calling for an end to globalism. His group, the Zapatista revolutionary army who's name comes from the Mexican revolution of 1912, that Rivera once supported, are active in Mexico's poorest state Chiapas. They demand that the indigenous peoples of Chiapas be respected and their culture and tradition be fairly treated in a land governed by the Mexican and foreign companies. This is reminiscent of the 1930s when Nelson Rockefeller began to foster economic development in Mexico, and the indigenous peoples lands were being exploited. Later, another Rockefeller suggested that Mexico join NAFTA (1994), a factor that eventually led many Indians to be forced off their traditional lands, face starvation, and migrate north to seek work in the United States. This country on the other hand is planning to build a wall on the border.

Thesis Supervisor: Krzysztof Wodiczko

Title: Professor of Visual Arts

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During my trip to California my teacher and friend, Jeff Rascov, helped to record the interviews, loaned me equipment to record the interviews in Mexico City and was always a support over the telephone.

The MIT Council for Arts funded the majority of this project and their support facilitated my research in California, Mexico City and enabled the final projection.

Fernanda Sanchez Paredes, whom I met in Mexico, helped put me in touch with Gabriel Figueroa and for her encouragement help translate interviews, for driving me around Mexico, and for all her support.

My sincere gratitude goes, especially, to Clo Hampton who helped me, eight years ago to come to the United States and without whom I could never have conceived of coming to MIT.

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## **Introduction**

### **Artist Statement**

Born the middle of a set of triplets I have always been aware of space, both from the middle and around me, learning to absorb and reflect my environment as a fraternal and identical twin, deeply understanding what it means to be both original and a clone.

Upon arriving from England to the Silicon Valley as an exchange student in the late nineties, I lived through a wonderfully experimental period where the surge of digital technology engulfed the Bay Area. Within a few brief years of immersing myself into the digital medium and building a fine art foundation, I realized a hybrid aesthetic that bridges the worlds of art and new media. This hybrid aesthetic in the form of digital projections is at the core of both the physical parameters of my work, and simultaneously communicates a reawakening of history, exposing realities of our current time and place.

Particularly with new media, and by new media I mean digital technology, we are at an intersection, where old cinematic traditions and new computer generated forms are being mixed together to produce different narrative structures that provide us with a unique opportunity to talk about the past and the present layered and juxtaposed together. This process of "remixing" old cultural forms with new ones allows us talk about society and important issues that pertain to us in our current place in time. The computer lends its self to collecting these forms, old and new, together into a structure that is conducive to talking about our time and place. My own visual practice uses the computer to interact with individuals in the real world, on a human level, via projection as a means to explore and present constructed animated realities that allow viewers to receive and access alternative viewpoints and histories. These animated projections attempt to define a new electronic cinematic form using the coding of murals to challenge our position as viewers and users and makers of new media.

## **A Time for the Mural to Return**

During the 1930's Mexican Muralist, Diego Rivera, descended upon the United States with a vision of Pan American union presenting an image combining indigenous ingenuity with modern US technology as an expression of man and machine as having a fundamental role in effecting the social, economic and political climate of the era. Mexican art was depressed by a sense of inferiority and Rivera sought to show the world the great genius of pre-colonial Mexico by revealing its inherent beauty that combined with modern technology could improve social order and exemplify a spirit for all humanity. This was the height of the depression, Rivera found himself in a unique moment where the US was emerging as a great power, embedded in a capitalist country but with Leninist ideals merged with native philosophy he took this as an opportunity to propel his own cultural ideals to the fore. Already controversial with his San Francisco and Detroit murals behind him Rivera came to Rockefeller Center, the center and epitome of this era of Capitalist progression, and technological evolution. Here he sought to subvert the context to present an allegory of Soviet and US compatriotism with his mural, *Man at the Crossroads*. This mural, a jigsaw puzzle of Indian, Communist and capitalist influences, is a snapshot of a complex episode where Rivera, and Nelson Rockefeller were engulfed in scandal and controversy. The moment shows us the special position artists can contribute to engaging in public issues by creating work that is challenging and disrupting to public space. But what, today, does this episode contribute? In an equally similar era of political, economic and social uncertainty, Communist China rapidly developing, parts of Latin America facing communist revolution with Castro in Cuba, Chavez in Venezuela, and Morales in Bolivia. A new Zapatista Army like the one Rivera supported in his time is active. What would be the repercussions of such an episode in a contemporary context? What does this mural mean for us today? How would Rivera react? Who would be Lenin? What would the public say?

Today as one wanders the lobby of building 30 Rockefeller Plaza, no sign of Rivera's 1933 mural remains. Relatively hidden in this inconspicuous area of the complex, and overshadowed by the headquarters of NBC television network and its famous, *Today Show*, the murals that coexist to exalt the vision of Nelson Rockefeller are lost, and absent from the minds of the millions of tourists that arbitrarily flow past these walls, and the remaining murals of Frank Brangwyn and Jose Sert. Drowned out

by the echoing of voices and the thud of their shoes on the way to the Top of the Rock, a City observation deck, the reverberations of, Man at the Cross Roads, fluctuate the memory of the building. The mural is missing. The people do not stop to think.

In 1933, the unfinished mural stands in the lobby of The Radio Corporation of America Building, entering with Rivera's assistant, Lucienne Bloch, we see the painter at work on the scaffold, the place alive with activity. Rivera paints ellipses showing the macrocosm and microcosm of the Crossroads of the Universe. Standing at the back of the lobby, this mural sits at the base of the 72 storey building, cast atop a floor of speckled black, with surrounding columns of white fluted marble, the space is austere and cold. The mural is alive, "a vortex of color vibrating...the violent fresh-red of the microbes swinging boldly across, balanced by the ellipse of the stars and nebulae." This is Rivera at the Crossroads, a communist outcast, expelled from the party, in 1930, for supporting Trotsky, perpetuating his artistic vision for a union of perspectives, in a place and time of competing agendas and perhaps naïve idealism, the man, the mural, and the place, represent a microcosm of this current social, economic and political climate. Nelson Rockefeller, his capitalist patron, looks at photos of the mural in progress. This is the first time he has seen what he expects to encourage a technological and philosophical awakening, beyond the plastic function of the paint, the mural emerges from its black funereal surroundings to animate and energize the room. Rockefeller is pleased. For him Rivera's work will reinforce his image as a cultural ambassador, in this the center of his expansion into the world of television and communications, with RCA and Rockefeller Center at the forefront of this wave, Man at the Crossroads embodies this as the center of innovation, technology, and media at the new frontier.

The Rockefeller frontier spread farther than a need to simply reinforce an image of good arts patronage, complex motives were afoot. Threatened by the nationalization of Mexican Oil, the Rockefellers began to support Mexican Art. This episode is the first such example where publicity and art collide erupting in the scandal that follows. As early as 1928 Frances Flynn Paine, a confidant of Abby Rockefeller, obtained funding from the Rockefeller Foundation for a project promoting Mexican popular arts. She had grown up in pre-revolutionary Mexico, spoke fluent Spanish and this 3 year program supported by Abby helped her become versed in Mexican indigenous crafts and art, developing relationships with Diego Rivera and becoming closely involved in art patronage between Mexico and the US. Cultivating a complex role as negotiator between artists and their rich patrons such as the Rockefellers, Paine was able to

execute her personal agenda's under the authority of the Mexican Art Association an official group she founded in 1930 with the personal support of the Rockefeller family. In order to be more independent the association was formed with a constitution aimed to, "promote friendship between the people of Mexico and the United States of America by encouraging cultural relations and the interchange of fine and applied arts." Under the authority of the association, Paine, sought to bring Mexican artists to the US to encourage an exchange of indigenous culture, with modern technology. The association represents a very close circle of friends and acquaintances including Abby Rockefeller. They held weekly meetings at Abby's home on West 54<sup>th</sup> Street. Her correspondences with the Rockefellers present a very astute and manipulative mind seeking to exploit both situations. Her role as Abby's art collector turns the family into the largest collector of Diego Rivera's work in the United States. Paine is a contradictory in her approach, aligning her self with the both communist artists, prevalent in Mexico, and the capitalist patrons that she represents. She negotiates the purchase of Rivera's May Day Parade sketches, which he would later incorporate into the Rockefeller mural. Paine was very astute and as her correspondences between Nelson and Abby show, she was involved in more than the purchase of art. In this role she coupled her interest for Mexican art and culture with the political aspirations of her benefactors. She befriends Rivera watching him paint his mural in the National Palace, securing the purchase of his sketches and organizing a MOMA exhibit and the Rivera-Chávez ballet H.P. Paine's influence certainly encourages Nelson Rockefeller to invite Rivera as one of his three first choice painters along with Matisse and Picasso for the R.C.A. building commission.

Also, politically Paine aids the Rockefellers. Through her, the Rockefellers have ties with Soviet group, AMTORG, the American Trading Organization, at this moment the only link that the USSR has with the United States. The United States has not yet recognized the Soviet Union. Some of AMTORGs representatives were COM intern Agents, also working for the secret police to find out about US Military and Industry. Paine is trying to help a representative of the organization negotiate space on the roof top terraces of the Center. In their personal correspondences, Paine has now initiated another project, to secure space for private organizations within the Center, and for sometime during 1933 she attempts to schedule a meeting with Mr. Bogdanov of AMTORG, and Raymond Hood as well as agents of Rockefeller. Bogdanov is elusive, and Nelson Rockefeller seems reluctant to meet. Paine is attempting to diffuse the politics of her communist associates by exposing them to rich American Patrons. In a

letter to Abby Rockefeller, dated October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1930, she explains her motives regarding the promotion of communist artwork in the United States, "Most Mexican artists, though 'Red,' would cease to be 'Red' if we could get them artistic recognition." It is May 6<sup>th</sup>, the mural is nearly finished, and Mr. Bogdanov enters the R.C.A. lobby. Representatives of R.C.A. introduce him to Diego and Frida. Frida recounts her story the next day to Lucienne Bloch, "Would you believe it if I told you this guy repudiated Diego, that he called him a troublemaker who had nothing to do with the interests of the USSR? As far as they were concerned, they washed their hands of anything related to the Lenin painting. This meeting has been hushed up." Naturally, Rivera and Bogdanov are at political odds. A former COM intern Agent himself, Rivera was ousted from the party because of his criticisms of Stalin as the leader of Marxism. He is also a sympathizer of Trotsky. Stalin is absent from the mural and Trotsky the Bolshevik leader is present, Rivera is presenting a future Soviet Union with Trotsky at the fore. He explains, "As long as the Soviet Union is in existence, Nazi fascism will never be sure of its survival, the Soviet Union must expect to be attacked by this reactionary enemy. If the United States wishes to preserve its democratic forms, it will ally itself with the Soviet Union". But this is not a Soviet Union with Stalin as its leader.

It is still early May, the mural is nearly finished, the floors are being polished and Rivera is contemplating how to make it less static. He asks Lucienne to find him a good photo of Lenin. The soldier, worker and the Negro farmer in the far right section, are to be moved closer to the center with Lenin clasping their hands. This will represent Rivera's vision, of "Lenin, the most altruistic visionary of modern communism, and the center of the inevitable alliance between the Russian and the American" (March, 1991, pp.126) Rockefeller responds and the newspapers proclaim:

## ROCKEFELLER CENTER OUSTS RIVERA OVER PAINTING OF LENIN

ROCKEFELLER CENTER

393

1954

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

In answer to inquiries, the following statement  
was authorized by Rockefeller Center, Inc.:

The Rivera mural has been removed from the walls  
of the RCA Building and the space replastered. The removal  
involved the destruction of the mural.

---0---

Fig. 1 Letter announcing destruction of mural, Rockefeller Center Archives,  
Rockefeller Center, NY

A year later the mural is destroyed coinciding with Roosevelt's recognition of the Soviet Union, and Standard Oil securing contracts with the very same government. Images of the destroyed mural are compared with the burning of books in Nazi Germany. Europe is poised for war, the Nazi's and Soviets emerging as potential enemies, and Rivera has put the writing on the wall, the mural shows scenes of an impending holocaust in vivid green and grey a massed infantry attack by soldiers wearing gas masks. One of these soldiers is spraying forth liquid-fire and airplanes and tanks move in the background. Workers bear slogans and banners, saying, "Down with Imperialistic Wars!" Beneath them a group of workmen sit on a bench in juxtaposition to them, a Jew, a Japanese a Negro and a Nordic. Across the Atlantic Walter Benjamin is beginning to write, his seminal essay, Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction. It is Berlin and he is at the center of this crossroads.

Rivera's large fresco occupied the place of honor in the front hall of the seventy-story R.C.A. Building and was the first detail of the building to meet the eye on entering from Rockefeller Street. The mural is a frank take of Rivera's communist viewpoint, but by no means unrealistic. The question here, Benjamin states, "At the turning point on historical events that is indicated by the fact of "Soviet Russia", the question at issue is not which reality is better or which has greater potential. It is, which reality is inwardly convergent with the truth? Only he who clearly answers these questions is "objective". Not toward his contemporaries, which is unimportant, but toward events, which is decisive (Belknap, pp.8)." With Rivera we see an individual and process that is in its very nature explorative. Like Psychoanalyses, the mural enables us to see and appreciate phenomenon that may have otherwise gone unnoticed. They are displayed in a plural way that enlightens our visual perception by exposing us to optical phenomenon that heightens our understanding of the world. When one looks at the mural one may travel to places where one has not physically been. The snapshot reveals entirely new structures and physical realities. Rivera introduces us to the unconscious optics of our world, of science, physics, and new technology. Has Rivera observed the truth? Is this a painting of realistic episodes? Or is he objectively responding to the qualms of his contemporaries?

Rivera seeks to present a total picture of reality. Spectators had often asked him if his mural was intended to be a caricature of modern society. He replied that it was not a caricature and he was, "trying to show historical facts so that ordinary man can see and feel." Like ritualistic art, the mural invites the spectator to contemplate. The viewer can abandon associations and simply contemplate the piece in its entirety. Driven by the desire to affirm a symbolic language representative of the world around him, he creates objects that rather than delving into reality, just plainly present it. Rivera casts representations of reality rather than reality itself. He is showing the possibility of what may happen given the current circumstances. The individual encounters and receives an infinite web of associations and concepts that are both consciously and unconsciously collected. In this way, this medium, in its very essence a reproducible one, gives way to a plurality of ideas that are accepted as relevant, good and utilizable. Rather though, Rivera might be thought of as an individual that imitates reality, creating a true or untrue reflection of the world.

The following year the mural is destroyed with mass protests and some comparing it to the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti. Thousands gather at Irving Plaza



Hall in NY with resolutions being passed by artists and writers, including Lucienne Bloch, John Sloan and Bertram Wolfe. Are both sides right or wrong? On the one hand, is the work of art, once lawfully acquired, to be looked upon as a piece of personal property, which may be disposed of as the owner sees fit? Does the work of art possess an intangible value not involved in a transfer of ownership? With regard to this question Benjamin discusses the only remaining photo taken surreptitiously by Lucienne Bloch. First she explains, "We acted very busy, aware the detectives were all over the place.... I took the first photo of the Lenin panel without looking through the lens...I was satisfied that at least one photo would be good."

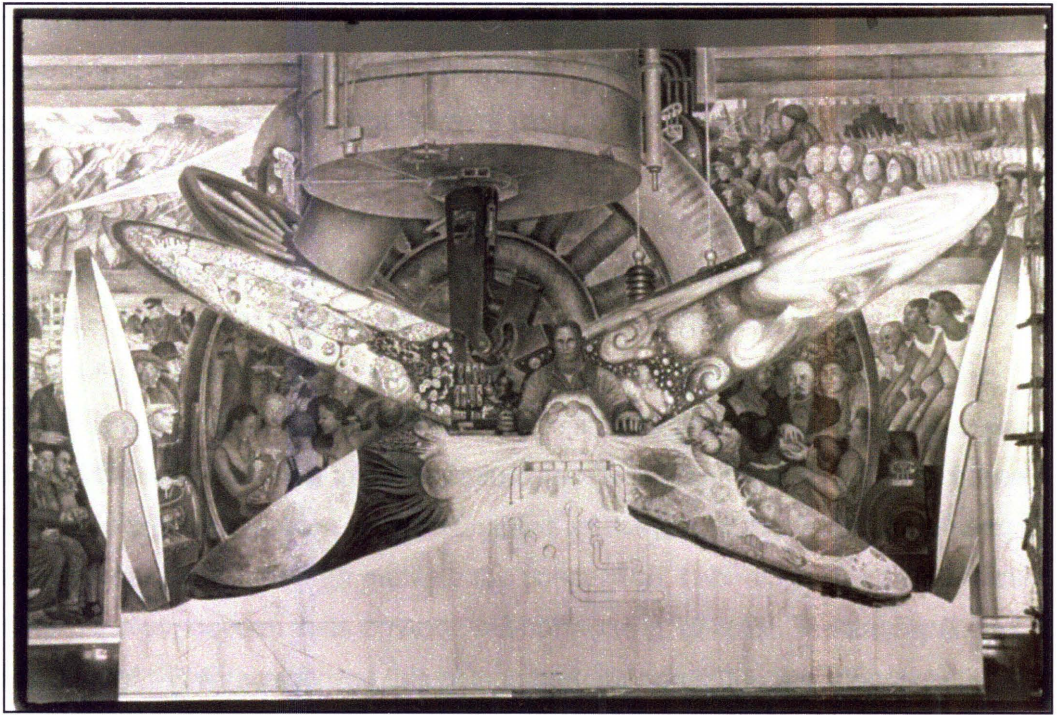


Fig 2. Lucienne Bloch's photograph of the nearly completed R.C.A Mural just before it was declared off limits. Courtesy Lucienne Allen

With Lucienne's photograph, we see the press' response to this episode. The photograph, this ability to reproduce has given way to an era in which, perhaps for the first time, artists such as Rivera, may take advantage of this opportunity, and re-evaluate the way that they respond to the large group of people through the projection of a single image or idea. The advent of a mechanical means to reproduce has drastically affected our notion of the original and authentic artwork. Not only does this spell a proliferation of



media, but also a newfound attitude toward artistic practice. With the withering away of the aura, the very concept of artistic individuality is challenged, changing our perception of the mural in terms of its uniqueness and presence in time and space.

Benjamin seeks to evaluate this new artistic practice and in doing so present's a vision of the new role of the artist. Rivera's mural is precisely about this. Both he and Rockefeller realize we are at a new moment in terms of the proliferation of media, an "Age of Mechanical Reproduction", with the arrival of reproductive processes that drastically effect the artist's ability to present their environment, and pose our society with powerful mediums of communication. Reproducible media gives the artist an incomparable form of expression. Rivera certainly understands the possibility when he gives interviews and publicly parades on the scaffold in front of the television camera's. But painting with the advent of reproducible media finds difficulty in competing with film in being open to a universally accessible audience. Because the painting exists in a single location the viewer might have to travel many miles to see it. Benjamin says, "Painting simply is in no position to present an object for simultaneous collective experience" (Illuminations, 234). Thus the importance of Lucienne's remaining photograph, as it will undoubtedly illuminate on this episode for years to come (Rivera used the photograph in 1934 to recreate his Mural at the Palacio de Bellas Artes).

Within these roles, notions of authenticity and reality impel and direct artistic production. The ability to reproduce has had a drastic effect on our consumption of art. The work of art is now designed to be reproducible rather than ritualistic. The fact that Rivera is able to offer conciliation is representative of this era. In his letter responding to Rockefeller, he says, "Rather than mutilate the conception, I should prefer the physical destruction of the conception in its entirety, but conserving, at least, its integrity (Letter to NAR, May 6, 33')". Rivera regarded this assignment as one of the great opportunities of his career. In Rockefeller center, once and for all, he wanted to express his political and artistic ideals for everyone to see. Here he represents his own interests; what he sees as the interests of the working class. But who's interests would Rivera represent today? What would Rivera make of our current political climate, and of the advances in visual technology that may be employed in artistic practice?

Today, Building 10, Rockefeller Center, now under the ownership of the Tischman Speyer Properties, is no longer the flagship building of the Rockefeller family. In April 2001 just before the terrorist attacks of September 11th, the Rockefeller family sold the building. Today the center remains a symbol of capitalism, very much like it

was in Rivera's time. The complex is home to NBC studio's, entertainment, exclusive shops, an observation deck overlooking New York, and year round activities that make it one of the premiere tourist attractions in the world. Rivera's mural was replaced by another Jose Sert painting three years after had been destroyed. The lobby looks almost identical, fitted with the very same speckled black floor, that Rivera walked on over 70 years ago. But what if these walls once again saw the mural of Diego Rivera? What would it imply and which realities would it represent?

With the world quickly globalizing, large scale advances in global technology, and attempts to develop the underdeveloped and alleviate poverty, over the last 50 years the world has experienced more poverty than ever before. Every year more people go without food and hundreds of millions of people remain without homes. The world's most powerful country, the United States, also experiences hunger with the richest 5% controlling almost 60% of the net worth of all of the population. Again there are wars as the United States responds to September 11<sup>th</sup> with invasions in Afghanistan, Iraq, and a reoccurring crisis in the Middle East. China is developing, and in Latin America there are again signs of communist revolution. With its scenes of impending war, and tragedy, as well as visions for a better future, *Man at the Crossroads Looking with Hope and High Vision to a New and Better Future*, seems just as appropriate today as it did then.

The Zapatista's, who take their name from the Mexican revolutionary leader, Emiliano Zapata, that Rivera supported, are active in Mexico's poorest state Chiapas. Their spokesperson, Subcomandante Marcos, demands that the indigenous peoples of Chiapas be respected and their culture and tradition be fairly treated in a land governed by the Mexican and foreign companies. This is reminiscent of the 1930s when Nelson Rockefeller began to foster economic development in Mexico, and the indigenous peoples lands were being exploited. Later at Rockefeller's suggestion Mexico joined NAFTA, a factor that eventually led many Indians to be forced off their traditional lands, face starvation, and migrate north to seek work in the United States. Again in early 90s, led by his brother, David Rockefeller, Chase bank, was speculating in the pre-NAFTA Mexican stock market. Mexico had a new leader, Ernesto Zedillo, and joined NAFTA, causing the EZLN (Zapatista Army of National Liberation), to begin an uprising against the government in 1994. Fighting lasted 12 days when the Zapatista's agreed to negotiate. In the meantime David Rockefeller, with Chase Bank called for the elimination of the Zapatista's saying, 'The government will need to eliminate the Zapatistas to demonstrate their effective control of the national territory and of security policy.'

Subsequent special rights and autonomy were given to the indigenous people. Today the Zapatistas call for an end to global Neo Liberal plans, where capitalism is free to dominate the economic, political, military and cultural world. In their Sixth Declaration of the Lacandona jungle, in 2005, they expressed solidarity with Cuba, Bolivia, and Ecuador to struggle for social justice in Mexico and around the world. Might, Subcomandante Marcos, then be a contemporary incarnation of the values that Rivera represented? What if his face were to substitute Lenin in the Rockefeller center mural today? What about Chavez, Castro or Morales?

Like Rivera, Subcomandante Marcus has a powerful understanding of image and language. He wears a rooster mascot, apparently as a symbol of the various disenfranchised people he represents. In his speeches he uses folk tales, stories so that that everyone can understand. He employs modern technologies like satellite telephones and the Internet as a way to obtain domestic and foreign support. The group though armed is non-violent calling for an end to globalization and support of social justice for humanity.



Fig 3. Rivera's Zapatista Landscape, The Guerilla, 1915

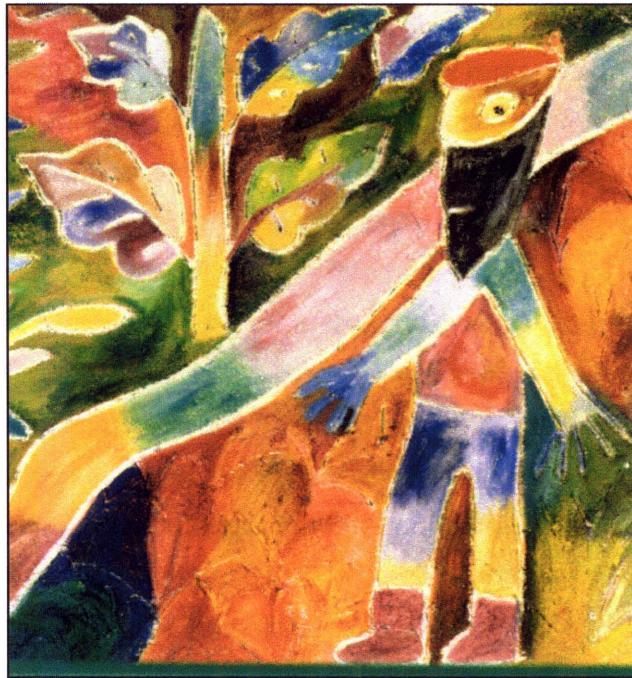


Fig. 4 An illustration of old Antonio from, *The Story of Colors*, by Subcomandante Marcos, illustrated by Domitila Domínguez, *The Story of Colors/La Historia de los Colores*

Might this philosophy be one in keeping with the vision of Diego Rivera over 70 years ago? Marcus' richly illustrated children's book, "The Story of Colors", about an old indigenous story, presents a mind, very concerned with the social, economic and cultural circumstances of the Mexican indigenous people and an in depth understanding of the power of the image, like Rivera. What might Rivera say? Both advocates of the people, the workers and indigenous peoples of Mexico would he support such a proposition? Rivera was also a member of Zapata's peasant partisans to overthrow the long term President Diaz in 1912. Earlier in 1910 he makes claims of his own plot, "The exhibition was to open at eleven o'clock in the morning....My part in the plot was to smuggle explosives into the school in my paint box. ...my friends pulled wires to get Diaz to attend the opening....but instead, his wife, Dona Carmen Diaz, arrived as the Presidents representative (March, pp.49)." Both revolutionaries representing the rights of minority groups, both advocating for the fair treatment and social equality for the indigenous Mexicans, in many regards their agendas align philosophically, artistically and politically. Given, a philosophical alignment how might a contemporary version of the mural be executed? What technology would be used to present this vision social justice, anti globalization and a new and better future for humanity?



The electronic age in which we live allows the user to interact with work in ways that have never before been possible. The age of Mechanical reproduction that Benjamin discusses has grown into an age of digital reproduction, where artists can employ developing technologies and allow the user or viewer to fully interact and engage with artwork. These advances in technology not only place a new role on the artist but a more vibrant interactive experience for the viewer. Information has become more accessible and the viewer is granted with power to use and manipulate it in ways that have not been possible before. Would Rivera employ innovative technologies of the Media Lab to present his message? Perhaps he would remain a painter?

Men of science and technology at the frontier of developments in energy, physics, astronomy, and communication are at the forefront of Rivera's Rockefeller mural. "The development of a New Generation...is protected by the work of the scientists...the result of the evolution of Technical Power (RCA Proposal, Rivera, pp.1)." It is precisely his goal that a hopeful future, is one where balance between technology and ethical development may be found to create a, "New, more Humane Logical Order (RCA Proposal, Rivera, pp2)". How would Rivera represent the investigation of molecular mechanisms in the Center for Bits and Atoms, would he employ research from the Object based media group using intelligent video and audio systems?

The lobby of Rockefeller Center, Building 10, is alive with noise. Tourists walk through on their way to the, "Top of the Rock" observation deck. Outside NBC presents its morning, Today Show. It is 73 years since the destruction of Rivera's mural. The year of the fiftieth anniversary of his death, and the hundredth anniversary of his wife, Frida's, birth. The world is in an equally uncertain era of political, economic and social problems. Computers allow access to information and opportunities in unprecedented way. The digital revolution paves the way for a recombination of the art, sciences and humanities. Diplomatic relations between the United States and its Latin neighbors remain integral for social, economic and cultural development. New York remains a major center of the globalizing economy that Rockefeller Center embodies. Man at the Crossroads Looking with Hope and High Vision towards a New and Better Future, has been absent from the Rockefeller Center for too long. Their original conception is as contemporary and timely today as it was 73 years ago. It is time for the mural to return.

## **Project Plan**

### **Stages of Research and Development**

- i.** California Visit to the House of Rivera's Assistants, January 2007
- ii.** Mexico City Archival Research at Palacio de Bellas Artes, Interviews and Recordings in Mexico City
- iii.** The Digital Reconstruction, A Fusion of Murals and a New Kind of Cinema
- iv.** Plan for Content of Mural, Characters and Schedule
- v.** Rockefeller Center Proposal
- vi.** Schedule of Work

### **Proposed Production Schedule**

<b>Schedule</b>	<b>Tasks</b>
<b>January 2007</b>	California Research Project/Interviews/Recordings of Rivera's assistants, Visit to California Mexico City Research Project/Interviews/Recordings, Visit to Mexico Editing of website, video and sound elements from Mexico
	Dissemination of archival information via website
<b>February 2007</b>	Video/Sound editing/press releases Public presentation of initial research website, testing of thesis questions against research, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Visit to NY
<b>March 2007</b>	Programming of Video/Sound exhibit Rockefeller Archive Center Project/Interviews/Recordings 1 <sup>st</sup> visit to NY Collating and organizing content for interactive exhibit, Proposing exhibit to Tishman Speyer 2 <sup>nd</sup> Visit to NY
	Experimental public presentations, testing of project
<b>April 2007</b>	Implementation of final exhibit, 4 <sup>th</sup> Visit to NY
	*Anniversary of destruction of mural
<b>May 2007</b>	Final Exhibition, Dissemination of Information, Evaluation of project, 5 <sup>th</sup> Visit to NY

## **The Digital Reconstruction, A Fusion of Murals and a New Kind of Cinema**

The contemporary mural puts the viewer in a place of mediation where they are asked to simultaneously consider how the past and future directly relate to each other. The mural animates with different generations of characters from the past in dialogue with contemporary counterparts. It is as though these animated characters anticipate the continuation of their discussion through future generations that pose a radical continuation of the past while proposing a radically altered future. These future generations when in dialogue and consideration of the previous ones, pose a radical continuation of what has come before them. The viewer is given a special role in which they may interrupt and disrupt the progression of time, by intervening in the dialogue, and in so doing pausing this moment in time, making it stand still for a moment of reflection and consideration of what has come and is to come. The mural displays the past and future in direct relation with each other, breaking them down in the present moment, to allow the viewer to understand the priority of the present.

### **Proposal for Contents of a New Mural**

The proposed project will take the form of a pending proposed projection in the Grand Lobby of Building 30, Rockefeller Center. The moving video image will be projected on the surface of a wall representing the current wall in building 30 Rockefeller, where Spanish artist Jose Sert's mural, American Progress and Time exists. The two murals, Rivera's original mural, Man at the Crossroads, and Sert's existing mural and contemporary digital recreation combining the two will be combined to create a vision of the two murals coalescing to create an alternative contemporary mural. The projection will combine historic footage with contemporary people in dialogue with these figures from the past, creating an alternative form of situational documentary in which the past and present are activating the future through a combined dialogue.

Where Rivera depicted the culmination of the evolution of the ethical relations of Mankind, this video will show human intelligence in possession of the forces of nature, expressed by animated lightening striking from the hands of Jupiter, who is the father of law and social order, transforming the lightening into laser beams that help cure mans ills, through specialized treatments that cure cancer, eye surgery, skin surgery, radiation

and unite humanity through the digital computer furnishing them with light and active power, such as photo-voltaics, solar power, solid state lighting, and optical sensing. As crude oil prices reach record highs, photonics technologies like solar photo-voltaics, solid state lighting, and optical sensing are playing an increasing role in efforts to reduce the impact of the worldwide energy crisis.

On the side where Sert represents the development of the Technical Power of Man, the mural will show immigrant workers in fields and cities, picking the food and building the houses that support the US population. Cesar Chavez, the Mexican American farm worker and activist, helps them arrive at a true understanding of their rights regarding the means of production, which has resulted in the planning of the liquidation of Tyranny, personified by a crumbling statue of Caesar (statue on the left without head) whose head has fallen to the ground. It will show the workers of the urban and the rural areas inheriting the Earth. Irrigation at the bottom today is represented as our limited resources, showing the misallocation and misuse of non-renewable resources and energy, the energy crisis. The Machine helps agriculture production.

In the centre, the Hubble telescope brings to the vision and understanding of man, the most distant celestial bodies images of mars and new discoveries, these scientific advances allow us to see things invisible to the human eye, but will open our perception. The microscope, microchip, and nanotechnology make visible and comprehensible to man infinitesimal living organisms, connecting atoms and cells. Exactly in the median line, the cosmic energy received by satellite technology, conducts information to machinery controlled by the Worker, represented as Mexican immigrants, or third world citizens, both male and female. They use the laptop computer to transform this information into productive energy. This energy emanates from the laptop and the central atom projects knowledge around the room. The four surrounding ellipsis rotate around the central figures, who are together moving forward, toward the new future. The mirrors on either side project the past, and future, spinning around at alternating rates to illuminate on previous knowledge for the betterment of the mankind. The worker is in control of cosmic energy, which is represented as an atomic ball held by a hand that rotates the ball. They are at the crossroads of the border between the United States and Mexico, in front of a high tech wall being built by the United States. The high-tech fences are in urban corridors, with new patrol roads and barriers in rural areas. Motion sensors, infrared cameras and unmanned aerial vehicles show the prevention of illegal crossings. Fiber-optic cables, wireless technology, transmit the cosmic energy through the air as,



represented today by knowledge access, via the Internet, transmitted into productive energy. Satellites project information to the earth, allowing ephemeral human access to knowledge that materializes in the form of products. In this era of knowledge, the digital revolution allows accessibility to learning, that in turn provides a productive form, aesthetic, and outcome.

The Worker, Subcomandante Marcos, gives his right hand to the Peasant, a Chiapas Native who questions him, and with his left hand, takes the hand of the sick and wounded Soldier, an American soldier and victim of war, leading him to a new order. On the right of the central figure, the mothers, and on the left, the Teachers, watch over the development of the, New Generation, which is protected by the work of the Scientists, who experiment with genetic engineering and cloning. Above, on the right, the computer screen shows a group of teenagers in the enjoyment virtual role-playing games, and on the left it shows a group of unemployed workers in the unemployment line. The top left corner, gives an image of War, Soldiers in biological warfare, wearing hazard suits. As in the case of unemployment, the result of high aspirations created by Ethical Development but unsuccessful without an accompanying parallel material development of Technical Power and Industrial Organization. The dot-com crash was created by the effects of an imbalance of demand and supply with an excess of supply.

The image itself is sixty-three feet in length and seventeen feet in height. About two thirds is completed in color and the remainder is an outline in grey. This area animates slowly showing irrigation and sprinklers watering plants, pesticides sprayed among the plants, and organic food picked by field workers.

The entire mural is vivid in colors that make each detail stand out with almost photographic sharpness; the image pops out and draws the viewer in. It is an auto stereoscopic video, which layers each detail in three dimensions visible to the naked eye. The entire mural is alive with movement alternating between Rivera's original painting and its contemporary twin. As the viewer moves their head the depth is revealed.

The prominent central segment shows greatly magnified germs, genetic modification, and the microbes of various diseases in vivid colors that suck energy from living organisms. The segment, elliptical in shape, fills the center of the mural and rotates around the central figures. The diseases are arranged so that the bacilli begin near the social scene, where the infectious and hereditary germs of society, the haughty taughty revolve around nightclubs and parties. At the tops the microbes are given life

by the poisonous gases of war, and toward the other end of the ellipse are the germs of the infectious and hereditary social diseases.

In the exact center of the mural is a laptop operated by the male and female workers, standing in front of a huge dynamo. The people in the mural interact with each other and the sound projected corresponds with their activities and interactions.

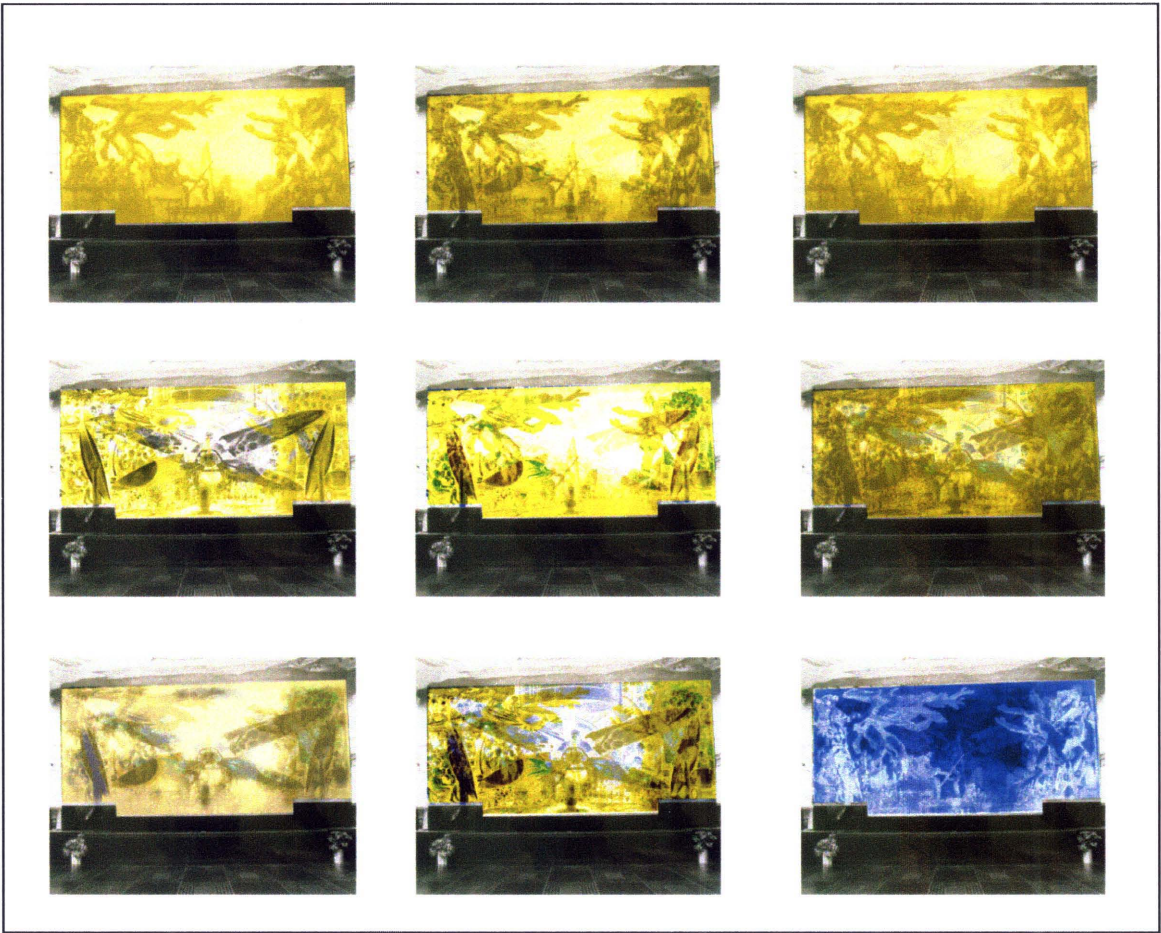


Fig. 5 Composite Experiment combining Jose Sert Mural with Diego Rivera Mural

## Plan for Content of Projection

### Cast Schedule

\* People who have accepted

Role	Name	Schedule
1 Man at the Crossroads	Immigrant guest worker	January
2 Lenin	Marcos	
3 White Russian Soldier	Traumatized American Soldier (returned from Iraq)	Dec/Jan/Feb
4 Black American		
5 Trotsky	Noam Chomsky	February
6 Engels		
7 Karl Marx		
8 Charles Darwin	Experiments in Cloning at MIT	
9 Teacher	Krzysztof Wodiczko*	February
10 Students	Young Third world Children	
10 People Waiting in the bread line	Poor immigrants/citizens in the US& Mexico	January
11 Lucienne Bloch & Stephen Dimitroff	Lucienne Allen & Husband*	December
12 Soldiers	Minute Men on California/Mexico Border/ National Guard	
13 Police Clubbing Protesters in NY	Police Clubbing Protestors in Mexico City	January
14 Social Scene	Social Party in US-Art Party- entirely disconnected	
15 Protestors	Protestors in Mexico City	January
16 Vision of Mars, and Cosmic Universe	Visualization for exploration of Mars/Images from Mars and the Land Rovers & Hubble	February

16	Central Atom held by a giant hand/Controlled by the third world citizen	\$100 Laptop/Nicholas Negroponte	February
17		Gabriel Figueroa Jr.* (Son of Gabriel Figueroa)	January
17		Lyn Hoffman (appeared in Rivera Mural 1940 SF) Daughter of his Assistant on Man Controller of the Universe	December
18		Sal DeGuarda, Appeared in Rivera Mural 1940 SF*	December
19		Footage of Rivera making Man Controller of the Universe (from Palacio de Bellas Artes)	January
20		Footage of Gabriel Figueroa recording Diego Rivera	January



Fig 6. Still from video animation experiment placing myself as characters in the mural, Oct. 2006





Attn: Glenn Mahoney, Director of Special Events  
Rockefeller Center, New York  
630 Fifth Ave, Floor 12  
10111, New York, NY

December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2006

RE: Proposal for Digital Media Project in Building 30

Dear Mr. Mahoney,

I am writing to submit the proposal for a special event in Rockefeller Center. This proposal concerns a projection to be undertaken as an integral part of my Masters thesis research at MIT. Included are detailed plans presenting alternative methods of projection so that you may fully understand the scope of the project.

As a practicing artist I have carried out a number of large-scale projections and I have the support of my advisor Krzysztof Wodiczko, who is recognized as a leading artist in this media. Jose Falconi, a Curator, from the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard has also sent you a letter of support.

If you agree perhaps we can set up a meeting to discuss the project. I recognize this as a very important opportunity and I hope you will consider my proposal. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ben Wood

# PROPOSAL FOR DIGITAL MEDIA PROJECT

IN BUILDING 30 ROCKEFELLER CENTER

A contemporary projection



Man at the Crossroads, *Diego Rivera*, '33

American Progress and Time, *Jose Sert*, '37

Prepared by Ben Wood  
Graduate Student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

December 2006

SUBJECT MATTER OF THE PROPOSED DIGITAL MEDIA PROJECT BY BEN  
WOOD FOR TISCHMAN SPEYER IN ROCKEFELLER CENTER, NEW YORK  
CITY

Rockefeller Center Mural Digital Projection Project

1. Introduction

This proposal involves a video projection in the grand lobby of building 30 designed to commemorate and reawaken an important chapter of art history as well as Rockefeller Center history that has been missing from the center for over 70 years.

In 1933 Mexican artist Diego Rivera was commissioned by Nelson Rockefeller to create a mural in the grand lobby of building 30. Rockefeller suggested the mural would address , "a philosophy of man in the possession of technology that would encourage a more ethical development of humankind" (RCA Letter from NAR to Rivera, 1933). Having this philosophy in mind Rivera created the sketch of "Man at the crossroads looking with uncertainty but with hope and high vision to the choosing of a course leading to a new and better future", (Rivera Proposal, 1932) sharing a philosophy of man in the possession of modern technology that would encourage this ethical development. Rivera controversially painted Vladimir Lenin on the wall and Nelson Rockefeller was forced to destroy the mural before it was finished. Close to the conclusion of the mural, an article in the World telegram, accused Diego of hoaxing his Patron, Nelson Rockefeller, who requested him to substitute the face of Lenin with that of an unknown man. The controversy of this mural has clouded this progressive vision of combining science and technology for the betterment of humankind. This project seeks to bring this mural back to Rockefeller Center in order to unveil this important twentieth century artistic legacy.

Being in the rich science and technology environment at MIT will infuse my approach to create an innovative and high quality project that will serve the basis for my Science Masters thesis in Visual Art. With the support of the MIT community this project will be a positive collaboration with another important American Institution that strives to foster art and technology for the benefit of humankind.

Today we are at another crossroads, a digital revolution that, like Rivera's mural, is paving the way for a recombination of the arts, sciences and humanities. This technological conception is as contemporary and timely today as it was 73 years ago. The Rockefeller center, with its character, and function remains a significant symbol of this pioneering spirit to use modern technology for innovation, and pioneering thought. The center's Architect Raymond Hood like myself was an MIT graduate student.

2007 marks of the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Diego Rivera, and the hundredth anniversary of his wife, Frida Kahlo's, birth, with many events being planned in Mexico. New York remains a major center of the avant-garde thought that Rockefeller Center embodies. Therefore this would be a good time for the absent mural to return.

New media and digital technology give us the opportunity to exhibit the past in a present context. The computer lends its self to collecting imagery, old and new, together into a form that will show the public, this moment in Rockefeller's history, in a unique, more accessible and unprecedented way, placing the viewers themselves at a crossroads and encouraging them to contemplate their own possession of and relation to technology.

A moving video image will be projected on the surface where Spanish artist Jose Serts mural, American Progress and Time exists. The two murals, Rivera's original mural, and Serts existing mural will be combined to create a vision of the two murals past and present to create an alternative kind of electronic cinema.



### Suggested Location

Grand Lobby of Building 30 Rockefeller Center Plaza

Alternative venues include, in order of preference:

Top of the Rock 70<sup>th</sup> Floor Observation Deck

Top of the Rock 67<sup>th</sup> Floor Reception

### Suggested Dates

Tuesday April 24, Saturday April 28, Sunday April 29th

Tuesday May 1st, Wednesday 2nd, Thursday 3rd, Friday 4th, Saturday 5th, Sunday 6th,  
Tuesday 8th, Wednesday 9th May

### Projectors

Consisting of an array of up to 6 projectors. The projectors used will be Eiki XT3 video projectors, each with a telephoto lens. The projectors will be mounted on a platform above the entrance of the lobby, with a focal point directed towards the Jose Sert mural. Each projector will cast an illuminate image of up to 10,000 Lumens covering the entire 16 by 40 ft area of the mural.

### Alternative Methods of Projection Screen

The following are 3 alternative projection methods in order of preference

#### i. Projection onto Sert Mural

A video image will be projected directly onto the existing Sert mural, covering the entire mural and allowing both the existing Sert mural and the projected Rivera mural to be viewed simultaneously. The projected light will not have an adverse affect on the mural.

#### ii. Projection onto Suspended Screen

A video image will be projected onto a screen that is suspended directly in front of the Sert mural. There will be gap of no more than 6 inches between the screen and the mural. The material will be approximately 16 by 40 ft in size entirely covering the surface of the mural. The screen will hang from a tork rope cordon supported by the two

adjacent balconies. The screen will not have adverse affect on the historic structure or building.

iii. Projection onto Mounted Screen

A free standing screen will stand directly in front of the mural located behind the concierge desk and mounted on tripods that hold the screen. The mounted screen will cover an area in front of the mural of up to 15 by 40 ft. The top the screen will not touch the ceiling and there will be a gap of 6 inches between the screen and the ceiling.

Lighting

The projection will function under controlled lighting conditions designed to illuminate the mural in correspondence with the projected image. Directional light will be cast on the mural using the existing lobby spot light illumination. Ambient illumination will allow the lobby to function on a regular basis. Spot lights on the lobby columns should be turned off to increase the dramatic effect of light projected on the mural.

Sound

There will be no less than 4 speakers in the situated in the lobby. Stereophonic sound will be sound will be moderately amplified throughout the lobby with the speakers situated on either side of the lobby entrance and the concierge desk in front of the Sert mural.

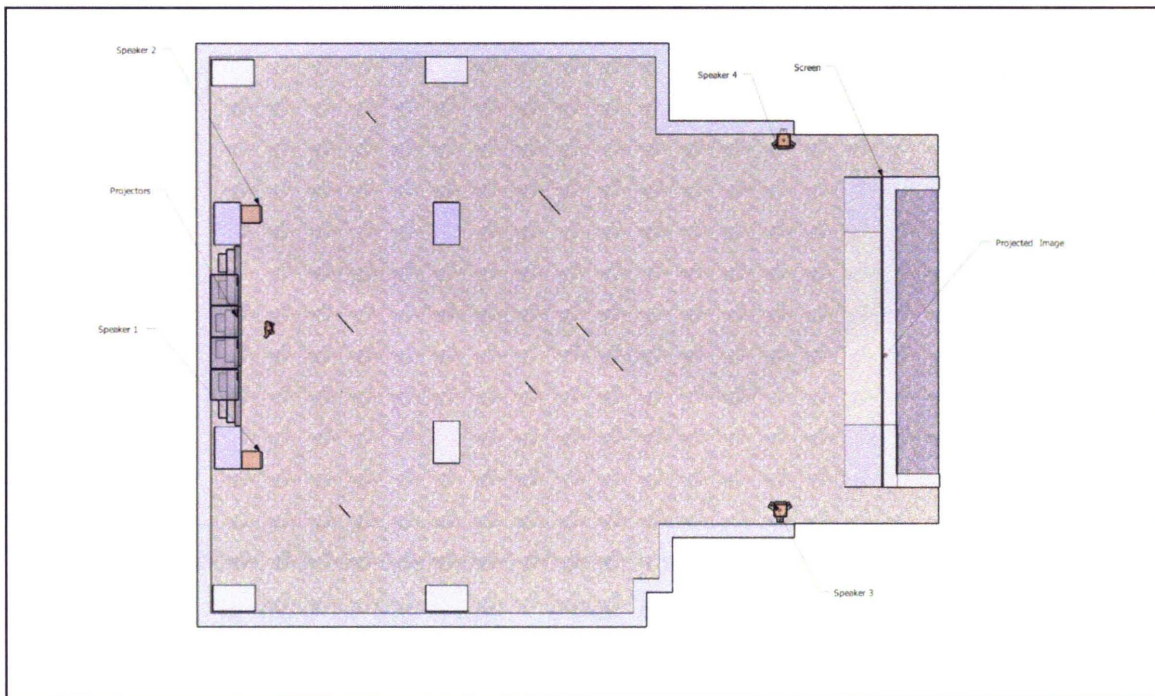
Power

In order to power the equipment 15 to 20 Amps, 120 Volt AC will be required to power the projectors and the computer. Available power situated adjacent to the equipment will be required.

## Diagrams

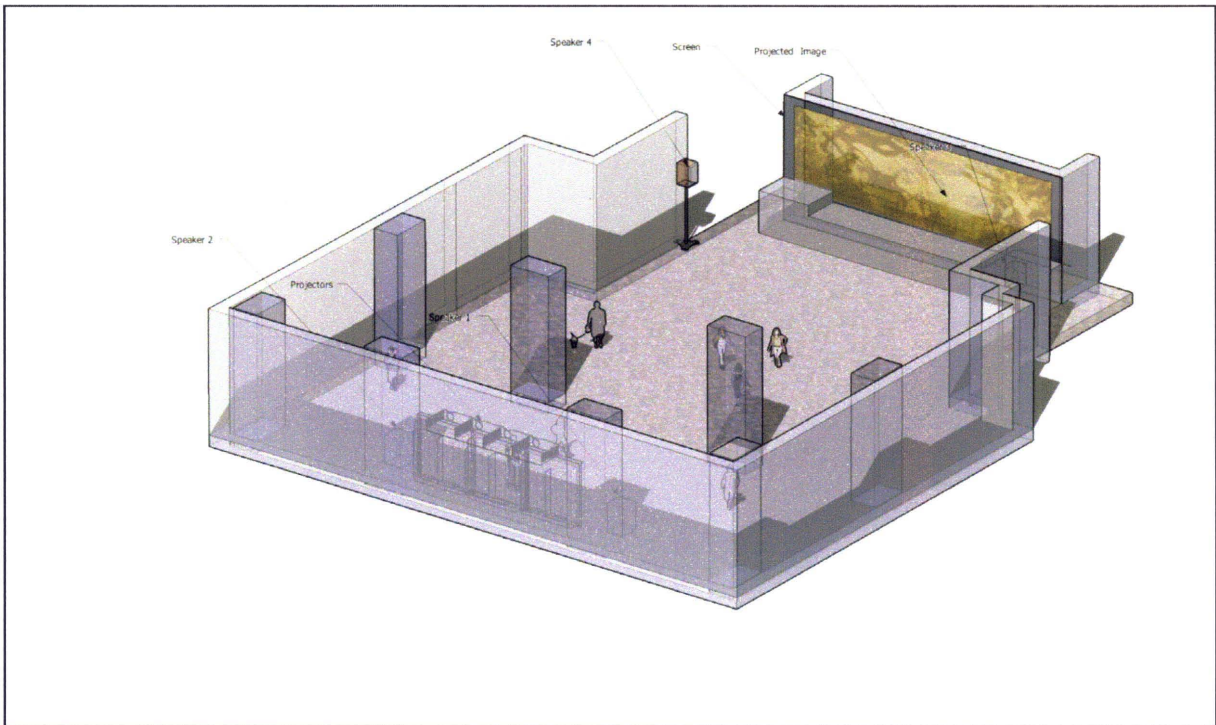
Fig. 7. Diagram Projection set-up

### Plan View



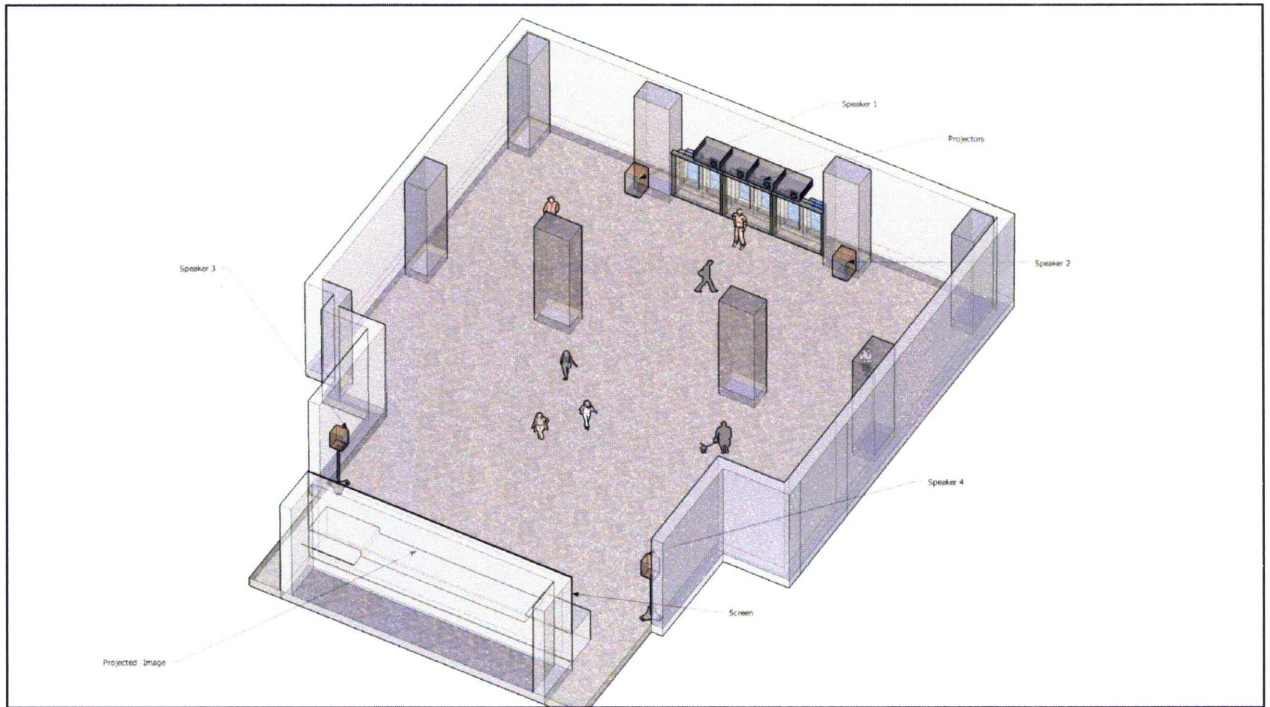
This plan view of the lobby shows the mounted projectors on the shelf above the entrance doors. Sitting approximately 9 feet from the ground the projectors from this position will direct an illuminated image covering the entire expanse of the 16 by 40 area of the mural. The projection will be viewable throughout the lobby with an optimum viewing position between the first set of columns

Fig. 8. Diagram of Projection Surfaces



The diagram shows the two alternative projection surfaces, the mural itself and a screen placed directly in front of the mural. Either of these methods may be used for a compelling projection but with quite different effects. The projection screen will entirely cover the mural allowing a brighter projection surface. Projecting directly onto the surface of the mural will allow an interplay between the projected image and Serts mural.

Fig. 9. Diagram of Projectors and Speakers



This diagram demonstrates where projectors and speakers are situated in the lobby. Up to 6 projectors and no less than 2 are mounted on the platform above the lobby entrance. Speakers 1 and 2 are situated behind the viewer on either side of the door and Speakers 3, and 4, in front of the viewer beside the mural, facilitating a stereophonic surround sound system that will enhance reception of audio from all angles of the room.

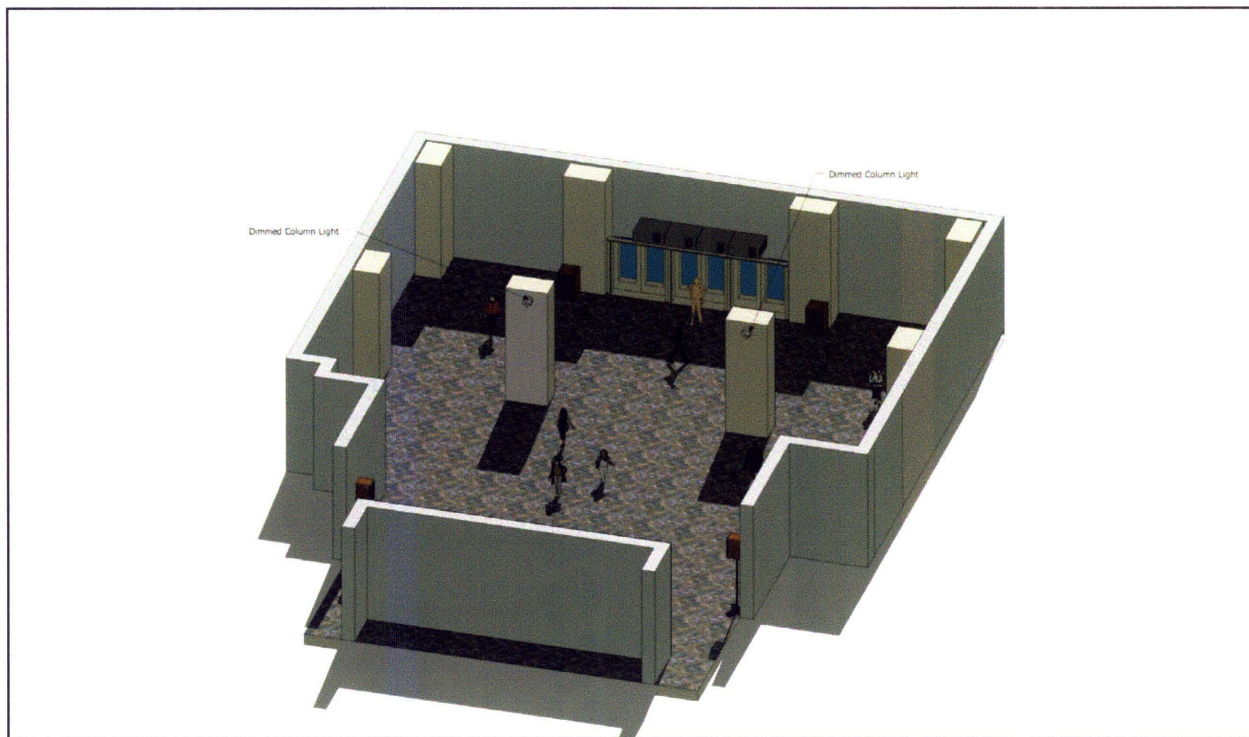


Fig. 10. Projection on Mounted Screen



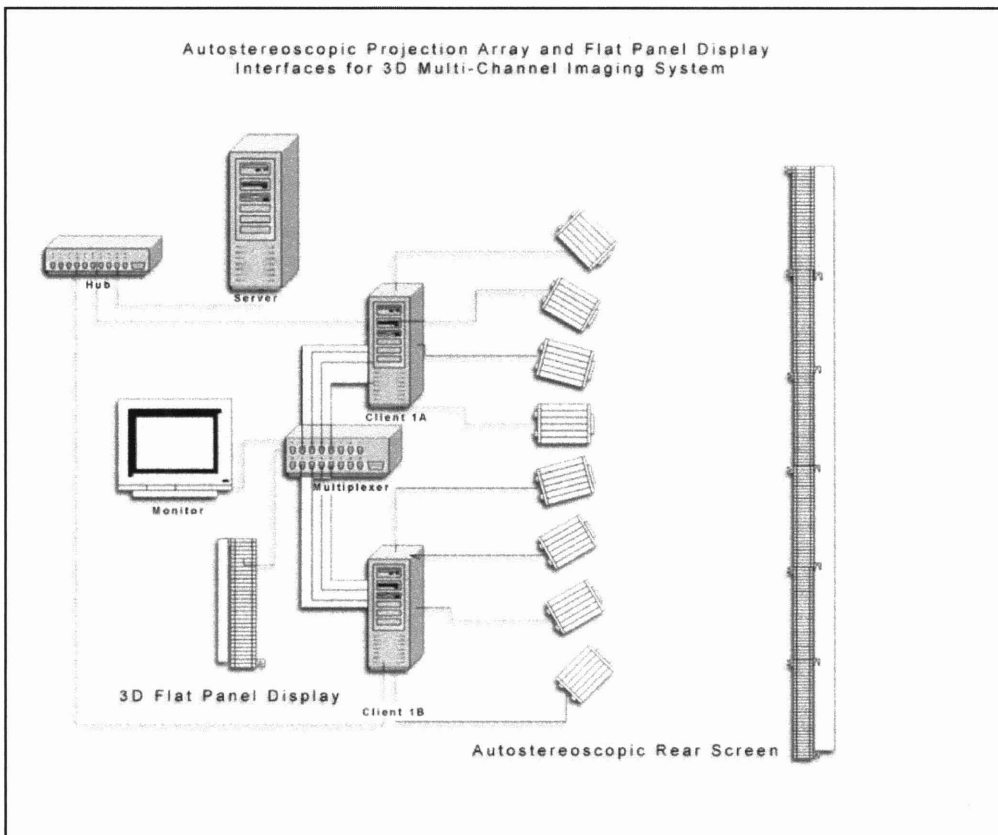
A free standing screen will stand directly in front of the mural located behind the concierge desk and mounted on tripods that hold the screen. The mounted screen will cover an area in front of the mural of up to 15 by 40 ft. The top the screen will not touch the ceiling and there will be a gap of 6 inches between the screen and the ceiling. The screen will stand one foot away from the wall and will not disturb the work of the security guards.

Fig. 11. Diagram of Lighting Conditions



The projection will function under controlled lighting conditions designed to illuminate the mural in correspondence with the projected image. Directional light will be cast on the mural using the existing lobby light illumination. Ambient illumination will allow the lobby to function on a regular basis. Spot lights on the lobby columns should be turned off to increase the dramatic effect of light projected on the mural.

Fig 12. Diagram of Equipment Set Up



This schematic diagram shows how the projectors will be controlled by the computer with various scenarios for projection on either the mural or projection screen. The computers will be situated next to the projectors ontop of the platform mounted above the entrance door. Situating the computers adjacent to the projectors will enable a clearer signal and reduce interference with the video signal. Available power situated adjacent to the equipment will be required.



## **Response from Rockefeller Center**

**Date:** Tue, 3 Apr 2007 18:23:33 -0400 [04/03/2007 06:23:33 PM EDT]  
**From:** "Reinholtz, Dawn" <DReinhol@TishmanSpeyer.com>  
**To:** benwood@mit.edu  
**Subject:** RE: Rockefeller Center

Dear Ben-

Thank you so much for your very interesting project request. Though it is very exciting I will have to unfortunately pass at this time due to scheduling conflicts. I wish you all the best of luck with your project though as it is a very interesting one.

All the best,  
Dawn

-----Original Message-----

From: benwood@MIT.EDU [mailto:benwood@MIT.EDU]  
Sent: Tuesday, March 06, 2007 7:25 PM  
To: Reinholtz, Dawn  
Cc: benwood@mit.edu  
Subject: Re: Rockefeller Center

Dear Dawn,

Thank you so much for getting in touch to let me know that you received the proposal. I am currently in Mexico City discussing plans for a possible collaboration with the National Museum of Art for a similar project. I look forward to getting your response to the proposal.

Very best wishes,

Ben

**[Hide Quoted Text]**

Ben-

Hello, Glenn Mahoney has forwarded your request to me regarding your digital media project for the lobby of 30 Rockefeller Plaza. It is an interesting proposal and we will review it and get back to you with in the week's end.

All the best,

Dawn

Dawn Reinholtz  
Event Marketing Manager  
Tishman Speyer  
45 Rockefeller Plaza  
NY, NY 10111

### **Visit to the House of Rivera's Assistants, January 2007**

The Rockefeller Center mural was destroyed in 1934 and only sketches, articles, correspondences and a few photographs remain, notably one taken surreptitiously by Rivera's assistant, Lucienne Bloch. Particularly in this digital era, where images can become the only evidence, or tangible representation of an event or artwork this episode conjures relevant questions about the originality and reproducibility of artwork.

My research has put me in touch with the granddaughter of Lucienne Bloch and Stephen Dimitroff, two of Diego Rivera's main assistants on the Rockefeller Center Mural project. Lucienne's granddaughter has invited me to look at original vintage photographs, newspaper clippings, and diaries, in person. At this stage it is very important to become close with all of the original material. The need to have first hand interaction with the primary sources is very important in order to seek out and find authentic materials, and stories to enrich our understanding of the episode. This stage of the thesis will record Lucienne Bloch's and Stephen Dimitroff's descendants as well as Sal LaGuarda, an artist living in the Bay Area who knew Rivera.

A site visit to the family home of Lucienne Bloch and Stephen Dimitroff in Northern California will be required to look at the material, select relevant information and record interviews.

### **Visit to Lucienne Bloch House, Gualala, California, Friday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

Today is the 98<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lucienne Bloch's birth. I woke up this morning in Gualala, California in Mendocino County, where Lucienne lived for many years until she died in 1999. Yesterday I had crossed the Golden Gate Bridge and traveled the 170 odd miles up the scenic Hitchcock coast to the house where Lucienne Bloch lived.

After 6 months correspondence with her granddaughter of the same name, Lucienne, I stepped out of the car, my breath was taken aback. Lucienne Allen is a young woman, with dark hair, young looking, perhaps in her late 30s or early 40s.

Lucienne and her husband David Allen live in the mountains outside of the small 500 odd person town of Gualala, California on a 52-acre area of land where Lucienne, her mother and her grandparents used to live. We were given a very warm welcome into

their house of 17 years and there on the wall in among all the cluttered beautiful works of art is a painting by Frida Kahlo that Lucienne had saved from the rubbish because Frida disliked it. Written all over the painting are the words I HATE THIS- I hate this! This painting, like all of the glowing beautiful objects around the house typified Lucienne's important role as an artist, a woman who helped preserve and define this memory by saving the Rockefeller mural.

We followed young Lucienne down to her grandparent's house and studio where she opened a folder exclusively about the RCA mural. As we looked through each of the photos, page-by-page we discussed the story of which younger Lucienne had a living memory. She and her grandmother had spent many years together working, listening to the stories and learning about the very rich and beautiful life that her grandparents led. Lucienne is possibly the leading authority on this mural, with all of the stories and memories of her grandmother. As we moved the pages of photographs and read the many hand written notes by her grandmother the stories came to life. Her grandmother would write everywhere, and keep absolutely everything. I asked Lucienne if she recalled her grandmother talking about finding the destroyed mural a year after it had been covered up in 1934. She recalled that Lucienne and Stephen were so shocked to find the mural destroyed that they never thought of keeping a piece but later they regretted not taking a piece, the only remains of the RCA mural lay in our hands, the photos taken by Lucienne and the sketch by Rivera that Lucienne had kept.

Lucienne took me to her grandparent's old house and studio next door. This is little house where Lucienne lived and worked. We looked around the house until finally we came to the office where young Lucienne works. This is the room where Lucienne and Stephen died. A year after her grandmother's death, young Lucienne found a note written by her grandmother when she was 9 years old. She often will find notes that she has never seen before; so prolific was Lucienne that is difficult to keep track of all she wrote. When she was 9 years old Lucienne prophesized that it would be in the year 1999 at the age of 90 that she would die and indeed she did.

Now I explained my reason for the project, to recall this important moment and to attempt to bring the mural back to the center, hopefully on a permanent basis, in order to permanently remember this important part of art history and to represent this

misunderstood and misrepresented mural. Lucienne completely understood my concern though she had never considered attempting to bring the mural back. We discussed the potential idea and I asked her what she thought. It was time to ask young Lucienne if we could re-enact the scene of her grandparents appearing in the mural. I asked if we could interview her posing in the position of her grandmother as Rivera has illustrated them some 70 odd years ago. I was surprised to see that Lucienne was excited and willing to participate.

We prepared the blue screen and lights in the room where Lucienne and David had worked for many years. Young Lucienne seemed happy that this would be an appropriate setting for the interview. She sat in the draped chair and was genuinely pleased to be interviewed. I asked her a series of questions about the memories of her grandmother and her own position as the descendent of Lucienne Bloch. She recounted the wonderful times they spent together. I asked Lucienne to read from the diary of those Rockefeller days, where her grandparents met and the famous mural was painted on the wall. David entered the room and he joined Lucienne in the place of Stephen Dimitroff to complete the section where the young lovers look on at the teacher Lenin. Lucienne recounted that her grandmother thought it ridiculous that Lenin had caused controversy especially because more risque images such as sperm were floating around in the scene above Rockefeller. (Young Lucienne believed that Rockefeller was also illustrated in this mural).

This was an electric moment to re-enact an important part of older Lucienne Bloch and younger Lucienne Allen's life. She as the younger generation is put in direct relation to her grandmother and caused to consider her role as the descendent. This was an emotional moment. Finally young Lucienne would be able recount the story of grandmother. What would she say if the mural were to return to Rockefeller center? What would her grandmother say?

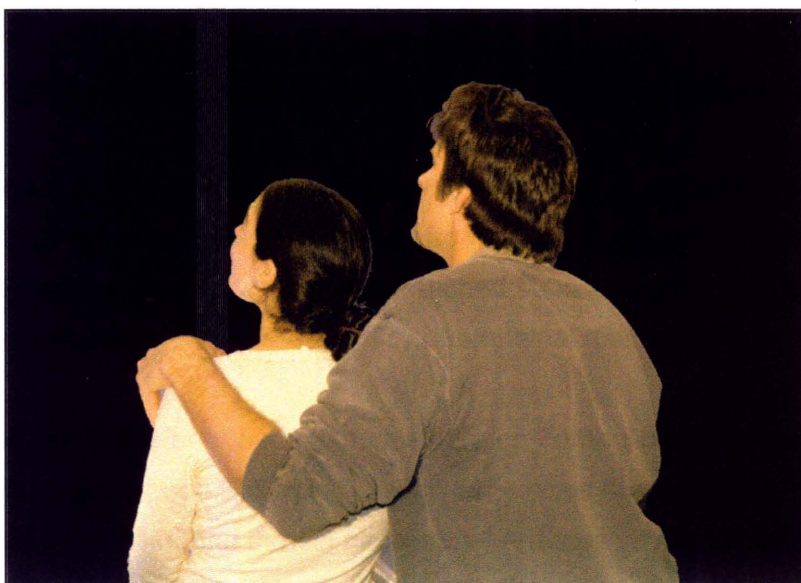
Lucienne was a prolific writer she noted everything, and wrote everywhere. It is because of this recording, saving these memories that she was able to preserve her legacy, her personality and her life. A long time before the computer, easily accessible recording, she wrote and wrote, demonstrating the extraordinary power of the written word, that,

because of its instant nature, can be more effective than any other medium, lasting longer, perhaps one of the best mediums to save and record our memory.

Fig. 13. Portrait Cartoon of Lucienne Bloch and Stephen Dimitroff as they look on at Lenin, Collection Juan Coronel Rivera



Fig 14. Video Still from Interview with Lucienne Allen on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007



## **Mexico City**

Since beginning the thesis the Mexican Presidential elections last July have caused unrest and uncertainty in Mexico. Already the Mexican people are calling for a unifying leadership. Some of my initial understandings of the political situation may be out of date, and my conversations with Mexicans conclude that I must talk more with Mexican people. Undoubtedly the return of the mural to its place of origin could act as a vision of high hope in these times of uncertainty.

Mexico City: Palacio de Bellas Artes

Trip to Mexico City, January 2007

Integral to the project research and ultimate success is a visit to Mexico City, the location of many of Rivera's important mural projects. This visit will include a visit to Rivera's reconstructed, mural Man Controller of the Universe, in the Palace of Fine Arts, and I will record his personal documents in his Coyoacán home, as well as the Rivera Museum and the Palace of Fine Arts. It is vital that this research be done in person in order to obtain the trust from the custodians of the material who may allow access only when this has been earned. My research will seek sound and moving image recordings of the Rockefeller project, consulting with local experts on Rivera. This visit will include interview recordings that will take place during the month of January.

First Trip to Mexico City, Thursday January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007 to Sunday January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007

I arrived last night in Mexico City. Everyone was so friendly and cheerful on the plane to Mexico City and they were markedly different from the business people that I had sat next to on the plane to Houston. As we approached Mexico City the plane tipped over to reveal the massive sprawl that is Mexico City, the original metropolis.

I was taken by Taxi to Meier Lobaton's house here on Tamaulipas in the area known as Condesa. The neighborhood like many in such large cities around the world is becoming rapidly gentrified and the old necessary hardware stores, unique shops that are a valuable and vital asset to the neighborhood are being replaced by upscale stores



and restaurants, that seemingly have no purpose other than to attract transitory wealthy visitors and sell expensive wares that perhaps do not contribute to the local economy in the most appropriate and effective

I left at 10am this morning and decided that although it would be a very long walk, perhaps an hour or so, I would go to Bellas Artes by foot. This would be a good way to see and get used to the culture and life of the City. Naturally I got lost and was helped by a kind gentleman who put me on a Bus. The City is noisy, the drivers are mad, but everyone appears happy, and generous, although it is only three weeks since the demonstrations next to the Palace of Fine Arts downtown, where a group of people from Oaxaca demonstrated in protest of the contested elections, perhaps by a group from the Other Campaign. Everyone appears, calm, friendly and generally happy despite the obvious unrest and unease that has descended upon Mexico City.

I eventually arrived at Bellas Artes where I met Tannie Lozano, the Palace Registrar who met and welcomed me so genuinely. As a result of the recent Presidential Elections the Director of Bellas Artes has been fired because she did not support the winning candidate. In apparently what is a normal practice the new Director, has fired the entire staff of Bellas Artes. Tannie explained that she was pleased I was able to come today, because next week she is not certain if the current staff will remain. Despite the lay offs the majority of the staff are continuing to work until new employees begin. Despite this uncertainty the staff were very supportive, generous and helpful, helping me look for relevant material, although they must have other worries on their mind, such as how will I support my children without a job. On the way to the offices I was introduced to the new director who was cordial and surprised that someone from MIT would be interested in Diego Rivera! I met with the deputy director and explained the work. Everyone is supportive and excited about the project. Naturally as exhibitors of Rivera, and of this famous work of art, they have complicit interests, so their excitement is to be expected, but not taken for granted. I was time to see the mural in question myself.

As I departed from the elevator and turned the corner here was a familiar and yet uncanny sight, a double take, just like the kind of feeling of déjà vu one gets, because you are not sure if they have been in this place before, or the feeling one gets when one thinks they are seeing double, perhaps when you are drunk or high and you are not sure

if you are really seeing what you are seeing. This was how I felt. Here is man at the crossroads, re-situated in Mexico City, re-placed, a clone of the original and renamed in time and space, a memory of its older descendent. Does it still have the same connotations here? Is it as affected as the intended space in Rockefeller Center? What if this mural today were to connote and discuss the goings on here in Mexico today, the protests a block away? The corruption, the creative spirit, the hope and vision for today?

Even the room looks familiar, columns obstructing the mural, just like its brother in Rockefeller Center. Lucienne would have had just as hard a time photographing this one as she did in New York! Although I have never been here, I had the familiar feeling that I had, of course I have seen pictures of the mural before, but this was an oddly familiar sight. Is this is how one might feel when seeing the mural in Rockefeller Center once more?

The City is alive outside, people in cafes arguing, debating, singing, playing music, this is a creative, lively center of the past and of the future. Cars are everywhere, police stand on every corner, and on the others people sell Mexican food all over. Tannie made an appointment for me to interview another of Diego's grandsons, and an e-mail from his daughter Guadalupe Rivera Marin confirmed another interview. Scheduled for the next week are interviews with Rivera's daughter and two of his grandsons, as well as Gabriel Figueroa Jr. and the director of Museo Mural, more commonly known as the Diego Rivera Museum. This cast seems perhaps to bias, a Mexican art elite group, who because of their famous parents, widely participate in the mural. Nevertheless these interviews will be very valuable in giving credence to the project, through their support, and by giving insights what only they will have.

This town seems to be fabricated from stories, superstitions, murals, religious images and art that constructs it as a truly unique, one off, but equally ubiquitous place. I can see how Rivera played upon these superstitions to build his work, and to fabricate and construct his complex and meaningful works filled with meanings.

During the next ten days of the trip I was hosted at Bellas Artes where I carried out research with primary resources. This research did not lead to any new developments except building relationships that would help organize some more interviews.

January 17<sup>th</sup> turned out to be the most productive day of the visit when I interviewed Gabriel Figueroa Flores and Diego Lopez Rivera. In the morning I arrived at famous Churubusco film studios to carry out the interviews and in the afternoon I was taken by Gabriel's assistant to the gated house of Juan Coronel Rivera, another grandson and wide collector of Rivera and other works. These meetings with both of his grandson would later lead to the possibility of showing this work in Mexico City.

January 18<sup>th</sup> I visited the Diego Rivera foundation to carryout and interview with Diego's daughter. Both of the interviews with her and Diego Lopez were carried out in Spanish although I didn't have an interpreter, they were more comfortable speaking in Spanish rather than English.

I returned to the United States on January 21<sup>st</sup> having not completed all of the interviews there was a necessity to return and that necessity would soon become more urgent when I arrived back at MIT.

#### Second Trip to Mexico City Tuesday March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2007 to Sunday March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007

Upon returning to MIT the need to return to Mexico to carry out interviews with more people seemed necessary, and relevant for the project. Immediately I was in touch with Greg Berger to arrange meetings with his associates from the Other Campaign and other individuals who might have something to say about the mural. Concurrently I got in touch with Tannie Lozano, the registrar at Bellas Artes to find out if I would be possible to show the project there.

After a week back at MIT, while I was visiting Rockefeller Center, I received a telephone call from Guadalupe Garcia, the deputy director of the Bellas Artes. After hearing from Juan Coronel Rivera and Diego Lopez Rivera and also talking with Tannie Lozano she was inviting me to return to Mexico City to propose a project for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Diego Rivera's death. Now the Deputy Director of MUNAL, the National Museum of Art,

she was beginning to formalize plans for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, this year, and wanted me to return to Mexico City to propose a project. The National Museum of Art situated in the historic district of Mexico City, is the former communications building, right at the heart of recent protests surrounding the general election.

The Museum invited me to return which would give me the possibility to act as a catalyst for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and to carryout more interviews. The museum paid my way and I visited Mexico for another week interviewing Guillermo Kahlo, the grandnephew of Frida Kahlo and formulating the plans for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rivera's death. I drafted a proposal, which has now been translated into the museums plan for the commemoration and homage to Rivera. The proposal has now been accepted and the exhibit is planned for November 2007.

#### Third Trip to Mexico City Thursday March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007 to Sunday April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007

After a compressed second visit to Mexico City, and because I was unable to carryout all of the interviews during the last trip, I planned a third trip in order to complete the series of interviews. During this trip I would finally meet with Greg Berger an American journalist who has close links with the EZLN Other Campaign that is proposing a redrafting of the Mexican constitution to give equal rights to indigenous people. He also was arranging for me to interview a border crosser, Miguel whom I thought would be an interesting to pose questions to about Man at the Crossroads. I carried out the interviews in Morelos and Cuernavaca outside of Mexico City in small room on a rural farm and in the roof of a clinic in the middle of Cuernavaca.

**Proposal for National Museum of Art Mexico City,  
March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007 For 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Diego Rivera's Death**

**Museo Nacional de Arte Digital Media Project**

**Man at the Crossroads**

**Introduction**

This proposal concerns a digital media project to be exhibited at the National Museum of Art in Mexico City as a part of the 50th Anniversary of the death of Diego Rivera in 2007. For this project it is necessary to consider how the National Art Museum, traditionally an institution that collects and exhibits Mexican Art from XVI to XX can uniquely and effectively commemorate this anniversary. The National Art Museum housed in the former government palace of communication, was designed by Italian Architect Silvio Contri and located in the Central Historic District in Mexico City. It is necessary to consider how both the architecture and location of the building can be employed to reawaken and reconsider the meaning of Rivera's work today. This project seeks to look at this important episode in order for a contemporary mexican audience to learn more about the relevance of this murals message to consider Rivera's important American work, and to encourage a public participation and dialogue in the original story of his Rockefeller mural in order to understand the relevance of its message today, "To Look with Hope and High Vision to a new and Better Future". Performative Events, Projections, Public Recreations of this mural, will encourage wider reinterpretation of Rivera's local work, placing Munal at the center of celebrations of the legacy of Rivera and his work.

**Suggested Location**

**Temporary Exhibition Space**

## The Video

This will be an animated electronic mural that will allow the visitors to learn more about this episode and encourage them to consider their own relationship to the original conception of the mural. The digital movie will include the following:

1. Creation of the Original Rockefeller mural
2. Destruction of the mural
3. Recreation as the Jose Sert mural
4. Contemporary animated mural

The moving video image will be projected directly on to the wall that will be visible upon entering the space. Covering the entire mural and allowing both the existing Sert mural and the Rivera mural to be viewed at different moments the video will explain the story through video and sound. The final stage of the movie will be a contemporary reinterpretation of the mural recording a contemporary public discussing issues relevant today.

## Subjects Discussed for the recreated mural

Man at the Crossroads in relation to the following topics.

Science Astronomy, Cloning

Technology, Global access to information in the digital era

Energy, Natural Environment, Global Warming

Religion, Philosophy

Politics, Migration, Unemployment

The project will present us with an opportunity to learn and discover more about the production of Diego's mural while participating in a contemporary digital mural project that similarly seeks to fuse elements of the past and present, in an attempt to shed light on past of Diego's mural, while attempting to seek out more from the contemporary practice and interdisciplinary collaboration of groups and individuals. This project will



seek to expose the mural, educating the public about its presence, and bringing attention to the important messages that it contains.

#### The Process:

The production of the digital mural will be an interactive opportunity for students and the public to be involved in the making of Diego Rivera's mural, through a collaborative process that allows involvement in its production, first with the recording process and then with the post production and compositing of the captured video and sound elements. Some footage may be required off site to enable capturing of contemporary imagery specific to the mural, such as landscape, or more detailed views of sites and locations around the city, such as scenes relevant to the mural.

#### Recording the Scenes of the Mural:

Performance events enacting different parts of the mural to encourage public participation in understanding it. This could be performed by extending an open invitation to the public, such as school children, high school and college students and also recreating different parts of the mural with professional actors. The general public will be invited to perform specific roles in order to understand the roles of some of the characters illustrated in the mural. This timeline will be created from the Diary of Rivera's assistant, Lucienne Bloch, who recorded each day of the murals painting.

This process will be facilitated by the scheduling of recording sessions, in which performers and actors participate in being recorded onto a blue screen. Sessions may involve demonstrations of the process specific to the project, allowing students to learn more about the nature of digital production, while also learning more about the mural and the collaborative nature of working on such projects.

#### Mural Unveiling ceremony

A ceremony will take place unveiling the projected Fresco on the day of the exhibition opening. During the unveiling ceremony a pre-selected group of actors will dress up as characters in the mural and walk around the gallery. On determined days of the exhibition these character/actors will perform different parts illustrated in the mural to help explain the story.

### Public Schedule for Video Production

(According to creation of original mural)

April 7 <sup>th</sup>	Diego Paints the Television in Mural
April 8 <sup>th</sup>	Diego Paints the Telescope
April 9 <sup>th</sup>	Diego Paints Communist May Day Scene
April 10 <sup>th</sup>	Diego Paints the Microbes portraying the Bacteria of society.
April 11 <sup>th</sup>	Diego Paints the Statue Jove and the Scene, "Liquidation of Superstition".
April 17 <sup>th</sup>	Diego Paints the left side of mural showing young students listening to the teacher Bertram Wolfe looking into the giant lenses that show the scene of unemployment
April 18 <sup>th</sup>	Diego moves to paint a violent demonstration on Wall Street in response to the desperate conditions of the depression.
April 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Rivera Paints the Man at the Crossroad, the main character of the mural.
April 24 <sup>th</sup>	Headline Appears in World Telegram "RIVERA PERPETUATES SCENES OF COMMUNIST ACTIVITY FOR RCA. WALLS – AND ROCKEFELLER FOOTS BILL
April 28 <sup>th</sup>	Diego Paints Lenin and transfers the group of the Black American, the Soviet Soldier and the Farmer close to the center of the mural.
May 6 <sup>th</sup>	Nelson Rockefeller sees the portrait of Lenin and asks Rivera to remove it.
May 8 <sup>th</sup>	Lucienne Bloch secretly takes the only photographs taken of the mural.
May 9 <sup>th</sup>	Diego ordered to stop work because of Lenin face and the mural is covered up.
May 15 <sup>th</sup>	Rivera is given his final check and looks for another wall to repaint the mural in NY.
Feb. 1934	Rockefeller Mural Destroyed.

Proposal for Project at the National Museum of Art, Mexico City for November  
2007 (Translated to Spanish by Museum)

Fig. 15. Page 1 of MUNAL Proposal for 50 Anniversary of Rivera's Death



**EL HOMBRE EN EL CRUCE DE CAMINOS. CONMEMORACIÓN DEL 50 ANIVERSARIO DEL  
FALLECIMIENTO DE DIEGO RIVERA  
NOVIEMBRE 2007**

Con motivo de la conmemoración de los 50 años del fallecimiento de Diego Rivera, el Munal presentará una exposición interdisciplinaria y multimedia que reflexionará sobre la disyuntiva planteada por Diego Rivera en su mural originalmente realizado en Rockefeller Center, Nueva York, *El hombre en el cruce de caminos*. El objetivo de esta muestra es invitar al público, a través del trabajo de artistas e intelectuales contemporáneos, a realizar una reflexión tanto personal como colectiva, colocándolo en la encrucijada del hombre como responsable de las decisiones que afectarán el futuro.

A través de esta exhibición, el Munal trasladará al momento presente la controversia en la decisión que el hombre enfrenta en cuanto al uso de la ciencia y la tecnología para el mejoramiento de la humanidad, invitando a diferentes intelectuales y artistas a reflexionar y trabajar sobre temas que nos exigen respuestas en la actualidad, y que se derivan directamente de los que Rivera propuso en el mural en 1933.

Se formulará a los participantes en este proyecto la pregunta que se plantea en el mural: **¿Cuál es la responsabilidad del hombre hoy en la toma de decisiones que se verán reflejadas en el futuro de la humanidad?** Esta abordará temas de la ciencia y la tecnología como el calentamiento global, la clonación, el acceso global a la información, uso de la energía, migración, etc.

Fig. 16. Page 2 of MUNAL Proposal for 50 Anniversary of Rivera's Death



La propuesta se estructurará en seis núcleos:

- 1) **Artistas en la Plaza Manuel Tolsá.** Se invitará a cuatro artistas contemporáneos a que realicen una obra ex profeso para plantear su punto de vista en relación a la pregunta antes mencionada. Se ha pensado en Diego Toledo, Eduardo Abaroa, Gustavo Aceves, Helen Escobedo, Miguel Calderón, Gabriel Orozco, Betsabé Romero, Perla Krauze, Francis Alys, Fernando Leal o Raymundo Sesma, como algunas posibilidades, sin embargo aún se está trabajando esta selección.
- 2) **Patio de los Leones.** La exhibición se realizará en el patio, dividiéndose en tres módulos que abarcarán las siguientes propuestas:
  - Se proyectará en primicia la película *Un retrato de Diego*, producida por Diego López y Gabriel Figueroa, integrando a la muestra la presencia de Diego Rivera en sus murales, así como en el contexto cotidiano como habitante de la ciudad.
  - Proyección continua de la obra digital realizada por Ben Wood, artista visual del Massachusetts Institute of Technology, que consiste en una superposición de cuatro videos que reproducen el proceso de creación y destrucción del mural *Man at the crossroad*, realizado en 1933 en Rockefeller Center de Nueva York. El último video de esta obra será una animación contemporánea del mural realizada con público mexicano, en donde se trasladarán los temas del mural a la problemática del día de hoy.
  - Espacio de navegación virtual en donde se abordará la presencia de Diégo Rivera en internet a partir de los videos realizados por jóvenes

Fig. 17. Page 3 of MUNAL Proposal for 50 Anniversary of Rivera's Death



- de todo el mundo y mostrados en el sitio YouTube, en los cuales se proyecta un personaje en ocasiones completamente alejado de la realidad, pero manteniendo ciertos rasgos de su personalidad o de su aportación artística, que lo han convertido en una figura emblemática del arte universal.
  - Enlonado del patio. La lona utilizada para cubrir el patio funcionará también como soporte para una instalación lumínica visible desde el área de exhibición.
- 3) **Vinculación de los eventos conmemorativos del 50 aniversario luctuoso de Diego Rivera.** Se implantará un sistema de vinculación digital con las demás instituciones participantes del cincuentenario luctuoso de Diego Rivera, de tal forma que el Munal funcione como el eje de esta conmemoración a nivel nacional.
- 4) **Coloquio.** Organización de un coloquio con la participación de los pensadores más relevantes tanto de México como del extranjero, a los cuales se le plantearía la misma pregunta como punto de partida, para abrir caminos de reflexión que nos lleven a la conciencia de la responsabilidad que todos tenemos por delante. Nuestra meta es llegar a personalidades como Al Gore en el ámbito internacional, así como reunir a los más destacados filósofos mexicanos.
- 5) **Catálogo.** Se realizará un catálogo en donde se vacíen las propuestas y las experiencias obtenidas en esta convocatoria, acompañado también de textos teóricos realizados ex profeso para esta publicación.

Fig. 18. Page 4 of MUNAL Proposal for 50 Anniversary of Rivera's Death



- 6) **Documentación digital.** Realización de un CD que documente toda la producción plástica, digital e intelectual de este proyecto.

Con este proyecto interdisciplinario el Munal funcionará como un espacio de reflexión contemporánea abierto a la diversidad del público tanto mexicano como internacional, y generará planteamientos que contribuyan a una toma de conciencia tanto individual como colectiva, de los problemas que nos atañen a todos por igual.



**Project Outline** for interview participants in order to clarify the series of questions posed. Each participant asked specialized questions and interviewed in their own home, office or studio space with a portable video recording equipment.

Interviews in California, Mexico City and at MIT, January to March 2007

Introduction to Interview Questions for Participants:

En 1933 el artista mexicano Diego Rivera fue comisionado por Nelson Rockefeller para crear un mural en el lobby del edificio "Rockefeller Center" en la ciudad de Nueva York. Rockefeller sugirió que el mural fuera acerca de la filosofía del hombre en posesión de la tecnología que inspiraría un desarrollo mas ético del hombre. Rivera pintó a Vladimir Lenin en la pared y Nelson Rockefeller fue forzado a destruir el mural antes de que fuera terminado. Antes de la terminación del mural, un artículo en el "World Telegram" acusó a Diego de engañar a su patrocinador, Nelson Rockefeller, quien le pidió que reemplazara la cara de Lenin con la de un hombre desconocido. La controversia de este mural ha nublado la vision progresiva éste. Este proyecto busca traer este mural de vuelta al "Rockefeller Center" para descubrir este importante legado artístico del siglo XX.

In 1933 Mexican artist Diego Rivera was commissioned by Nelson Rockefeller to create a mural in the grand lobby of building 30 Rockefeller Center in New York City. Rockefeller suggested the mural would address , "a philosophy of man in the possession of technology that would encourage a more ethical development of humankind" (RCA Letter from NAR to Rivera, 1933). Having this philosophy in mind Rivera created the sketch of "Man at the crossroads looking with uncertainty but with hope and high vision to the choosing of a course leading to a new and better future", (Rivera Proposal, 1932) sharing a philosophy of man in the possession of modern technology that would encourage this ethical development. Rivera controversially painted Vladimir Lenin on the wall and Nelson Rockefeller was forced to destroy the mural before it was finished. Close to the conclusion of the mural, an article in the World telegram, accused Diego of hoaxing his Patron, Nelson Rockefeller, who requested him to substitute the face of Lenin with that of an unknown man. The controversy of this mural has clouded this progressive vision of this mural. This project seeks to bring this mural back to Rockefeller Center in order to unveil this important twentieth century artistic legacy.

**Lucienne Allen** is the granddaughter of Lucienne Bloch, the assistant and photographer for Diego Rivera for his project at Rockefeller Center. I visited her on her farm in Northern California to take a look at the photographs from the project and to interview her about her grandparents work on the project and of the implications of the mural returning to Rockefeller Center today. The visit took place on the eve of the 98<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lucienne Bloch's birth.

Interview Questions for Lucienne Allen, Granddaughter of Rivera Assistant, Lucienne Bloch, Friday January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007, Old Stage Studios, Gualala, Mendocino County, California

1. What were your Grandparents goals for their work as muralists and teachers?
2. How did they see their own vision and contribution socially and politically as Rivera's students?
3. Can you tell me more about how your grandmother reacted to the covering of the mural?
4. What was their mantra? Can you tell me about their philosophy about life?
5. Your grandparents were illustrated as the young lovers watching Lenin as he clasped the hand of the African American and White Russian soldier. . This mural was where they met and began their life together. Do you remember what they thought about being depicted in the mural?
6. Did your grandparents have any special anecdotes of Rivera painting them?
7. Can you tell me about your grandmothers relationship with Kahlo?
8. As a direct descendent of these two artists- how do you see your relationship to this mural? What is your role as the guardian of their legacy?
9. Did you grandmother talk to you about the moment she found the destroyed hacked mural?

10. Do you know the story of your grandmothers brother who helped Rivera depict the television that sits next to Darwin?

11. Ask Lucienne to read selected passages from her grandmother's diary.

Lucienne Allen Responds (Edited)

He had painted the spermatozoa underneath them swimming and she said, quick, get my pisery, and it was during a time when you normally wouldn't necessarily be sleeping out of wedlock and they were having an affair, living together, and it was not the common thing of 1933 and they were ok with it and it was a joke and it was a funny thing about it. They were very proud to have been painted looking up as frank comradesly lovers up to Lenin and they were comrades. She, my grandmother in particular really felt that fresco was a dead art, that was centuries old and when she found out it was being done in the 20<sup>th</sup> century she wanted to learn from him, from Diego. When my grandfather heard that this fantastic muralist was in town, in Detroit, when he was a young man, he went to, just to meet the man. He was more in awe of Diego Rivera, the muralist, the Mexican painter and all he wanted to do was meet him. He ended up working for him and learning and it was a fantastic thing for him to be able to learn a trade like that, at his young age. He knew he liked art and he appreciated the art that he was doing, but it was the trade that he was learning, it was the plastering technique and then when they decided that they could do this on their own after working with Rivera for a year or so, a couple of years, they tried. They worked on their very first mural together. They both painted in their very first mural together and it was after they did this first one that they realized after actually that their styles and techniques didn't really work that well and it was from then on that they decided my grandfather would be the technical assistant, my grandmother would be the artist and it formed their life, the time they spent with Diego and Frida, both of them. They were both such huge people, just because of who they were not because of what everybody else thought they were but of their relationship that they had with them of the way they could speak, of the knowledge that they had, whether it was about art, or politics and they learned a lot, they were also very young at the time. Frida was a couple of years older than my grandmother but Diego was older. So here was a man in a position to teach them, an older man and he had so much to teach and so it was an exciting time and then of course just the times

themselves were emotional and moving and the rallies and the demonstrations they would go to and the places they would talk and at one point my grandmother was translating for Rivera and the things she was saying she couldn't believe that she could stand up on the stage and yell things out to this crowd of people, that were so moving and so important to what was going on right then for all these people, these lives that were being effected by what she was saying through Diego it helped form who these people became. 65 years later they were still talking about Rivera, they were teaching fresco to students at different colleges throughout the United States and the stories they were telling were about the times they spent working for Rivera or painting on his mural.

Rivera came into where she and my grandfather were which I believe was in the shack. He came in and he said, Stop Work! And he was wearing plain cloths. Immediately when they saw him in plain cloths they were taken aback So then he says stop work and he says we've been told to stop work and then he explained to them, he says and she was, my grandmother was really upset. She just thought this was awful. And he put his arm around her shoulder and he says. He said, "Now the Battle Begins". She was mad. She took the muddy water that was in the bucket and she splashed it over on the floor and they turned around and they left, but the phone lines got cut, they couldn't make calls out. It was a little scary I think. I think they felt something was brewing but they didn't know quite what was going to happen and then they taped the mural, they put huge tarps over the entire front of the mural and then they whitewashed the windows and everybody scratched in the window some form of cuss word in their native language and my grandfather did something in Bulgarian, my grandmother did something in French and I think there was something in Spanish and I don't know what the other language was, if it was Japanese or Chinese. But that was an intense time. And of course she really didn't believe that anything would happen to the mural. It was covered, that was bad enough but about a year later when she and my grandfather were, I think they were coming home from a movie, and they decided they would go by, just to check out the old place, and they walked past these 55 gallon drums and they looked inside and there was the mural, in pieces, chopped up which had to have been sledge hammered, because your fresco, especially on the metal lathed wall, your plaster going to be a couple of inches thick. So it was shocking to them, shocking.

He was in the cartoon with a hat on so it was no big deal. It was when a lady came into

take photographs for a newspaper article and she made a big deal about it, and he said well you're going to make a big deal about it, well let me just put him right front and center then, you think this little bit of Lenin with his hat on to the side is a big deal, I'll show you a big deal. So he changed the cartoon at that point and I still don't think it seemed that terrible, I just don't think my grandparents had the concept that people would not rent places in this gigantic building because of the picture of a soviet leader on a mural.

**Gabriel Figueroa Flores** is the son of the influential cinematographer Gabriel Figueroa who worked with Diego Rivera. Today he works with Diego Lopez Rivera, the grandson of Diego Rivera on a film, *A Portrait of Diego Rivera* that was directed by Rivera, produced by Figueroa, and photographed by Manuel Alvarez Bravo. Figueroa Jr. is a prominent photographer in Mexico City. On January 17<sup>th</sup> I visited he and Diego Lopez, in the Churubusco Studios in Coyoacan, to learn more about their collaboration and interview them about, *Man at the Crossroads*.

Interview Questions for Gabriel Figueroa Flores, Son of Mexican Cinematographer  
Gabriel Figueroa January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007, Churubusco Studios, Rio Escondido, Coyoacan,  
Mexico D.F

Please Say your name and who you are

1. What was your father's relationship with Diego Rivera? He was known as the Fourth Mexican muralist, after Rivera, Siqueiros and Orozco. Why was he known as the fourth and what do you think of this?
2. What was his relationship with each of these artists? Rivera, Orozco and Siqueiros?
3. Your Fathers films referenced European aesthetic traditions like German expressionism and yet they equally represent the spirit of Mexico. How did your father see his role in representing and defining the aesthetic culture of Mexico?
4. In his description of his mural man at the crossroads, Rivera explained that the television and the moving image have the ability to unite and activate humans with power and intelligence. Like your father his work sought to activate and inspire a new social movement. How did your father envision his work affecting the social order in Mexico?
5. How do you see your current collaboration with Diego Lopez Rivera as a continuation of the relationship of your father and Diego?



6. Can you tell me about your Father's role in establishing the union for Cinema artists? How did this affect his work as a filmmaker working in the United States?

7. How did your father see his work effecting the social and political relationship between Mexico and the United States as an artist working in both countries in the 30s, 40s, 50's and onward?

The New York Mural:

8. Did your father ever discuss the episode of Rivera's mural in New York, and if so what did he say?

9. What do you think about the social and political significance of this mural today?

10. The mural depicts poor workers waiting in the breadline during the 1930s. How do you see the economic circumstances of Mexico today in relation to the circumstances of the 1930s?

11. In his mural Rivera shows man inheriting the earth, the workers of the cities and the country understanding their role in contributing to society? How do you see this as an analogy for contemporary Mexico?

12. How could this mural be a vision of "Hope and High Vision" for Mexico today?

13. What is the significance today of this mural's message to combine science and technological innovation to propose an ethical vision of hope for the future? How is this vision relevant today for Mexico and the world?

14. The mural depicts man with access to information that can lead to knowledge and a brighter future. Well before the Internet Rivera, envisioned this mural to propose greater and easier access to information resulting in knowledge. What does this mean for the poor uneducated children of Mexico, the young generation of developing countries today?

15. As the direct descendent of this great filmmaker- how do you see your relationship to this mural, and their role as artistic visionaries? What is your role as the guardian of their legacy?

16. Do you have any additional comments or anecdotes that you wish to share?

Gabriel Figueroa Flores Responds (Edited)

My name is Gabriel Figueroa Flores and I am the son of cinematographer Gabriel Figueroa.

When my father knew Diego Rivera they lived in the same place the street was called mescalco and the number was 12 and my father had a small quarter there and Diego Rivera was there. My father being a still photographer, he offered some of his services photographing paintings or sculptures and that's the way they met. They became good friends Diego Rivera was charming and very intelligent and my father was starting his artistic career and well I think Diego Rivera was already becoming a great personality so that's how they met. Diego Rivera was very interested in Cinema and that's why they got together on several occasions. Diego Rivera used to say that my father was a muralist that his films were like moving muralism and they have the ability to travel and that's why they were more powerful than the ones that were on the walls standing.

I would add to this notion that his work was more related to European cinematography than artistic movements in cinema because he was a good friend of Gregg Toland and Gregg Toland was an American who did the cinematography for Citizen Kane and Gregg Toland was his mentor so I think my father made a sort of a unique style that was a sort of a cross breed between what Toland gave him and the European expressionism and the German expressionism to become a sort of a personal style and I think that style got stronger because as any cinematographer would know you have to create the visual condition so that the story is told, and that's what my father did. And if the stories were about the revolution or about social problems obviously he did a very good job in recreating the environment, the ambience where the story took place. He was politically concerned obviously but his views on his work affecting socially were not that clear at least from what I heard he was talking about. He was at the service of a story and he tried to portray that story the best he could. Obviously he had a choice. Instead of doing

comedies or doing cheap melodrama's he decided to take his work into dramatic and more important scripts, stories you know but he did, "The Pearl", that was a John Steinbeck script, a novel, and he did the fugitive, that was a Graham Green story with John Ford, so those stories were the ones that he was seeking to express himself through his cinematography and that's what was really important, not so much a political point of view, or a social point of view.

I think what united us nowadays was the fact that we have the consciousness of inheriting, we inherited and not only blood line but we inherited things, you know this documentary we are doing is something that my father produced, Manuel Alvarez Bravo photographed, and Diego Rivera acted and directed and it was in my archives that my father gave me so this is what unites us Diego and me, that we are taking a historical consciousness and of where we come from and I think that's a very strong bond.

When Rivera said that he was already into the nationalistic movement way in it and that means that it was a movement where a lot of intellectuals and artists participating among them, obviously my father, who came perhaps a little later, because, cinema developed a little later than the actual murals and therefore it found a good way of expressing certain archetypes of Mexican culture or Mexican art through films. I think that's the way cinema inspired in this nationalistic movement.

Its very difficult to for any visual artist to represent what human consciousness means or caring for the other or compassion for the other and maybe it was more appropriate at that time when scientists and all these new technologies, communication technologies were discovered and developed to portray that as a hope for human kind to become a better human kind. But I think that doesn't apply because we are full of technologies, full of information nowadays and I don't see that people care enough about other people and that is what is not developing at this point. You can have good intentions but, I don't think, if you don't have really the commitment to care about the other and for the well being of other human beings, technology or not, you are not going to go anywhere and I don't think that is happening nowadays. We are not caring enough for others and that's why the world is what it is. It's divided in two, the privileged ones and the ones that have nothing.

When a nation becomes so powerful as the United States are at the moment. The real concern is not about others, the real concern is about themselves and how they can acquire more power. I think, to me, its really stupid how the most powerful nation in the world cannot make a migrant treaty with his neighbor. I find that ridiculous. They have to build a, billions and billions of dollars wall to prevent others coming in, which is, in my opinion pedestrian, instead of doing something more intelligent. Work with others is more intelligent than preventing others to having knowledge, or access or privileges or whatever and I don't see that happening between the United States and Mexico.

In Mexico, obviously, we have not created the conditions for the Mexican's not to go abroad. We don't have a strong internal market or internal works that would prevent us from going to seek better opportunities in other parts of the world. I see it more as a social problem than a technological problem and that's where I don't think there is a possible understanding, especially the way we see things, the Americans have a very puritan, very in a certain way, straightforward way of seeing laws, behaviors, but their ethics don't match the way they behave.

Siqueiros had a more optical point of view and for Siqueiros, photography was an instrument to produce his murals. The for shortenings, for example was one, and my father used the foreshortenings in certain scenes in his movies and those are the kind of things, the romantic lighting of Orozco was used in some of my fathers images. For instance when Siqueiros had an exhibit and my father went to the opening of that exhibit Siqueiros used to welcome him saying, "You came to see what I stole from you?" and my father replied no, "I came to see what I could steal from you for my next picture". So that was a good relationship they had together. My father helped Siqueiros when he was in jail, in the sense of talking to the Mexican President who was my father's cousin at the time, to see how they could solve the political problem of having Siqueiros in jail. With Orozco it was another relationship. Orozco was a more austere and secluded man but my father confessed that he used one of his aquarelles and almost reproduced it exactly in one of his films, Flore Silvestre in 1943. And they were sitting together in the theatre and the scene came along, and Orozco jumped from his seat and my father said, "I'm an honest thief, this is from one of your aquarelles." And Orozco replied, "Yes but you have to show me how you acquire this volume and texture of tones, which I did not

get in my aquarelle. So that's more or less how they interacted together. By sharing points of view and by sharing different ways of seeing.

Interview Questions for Diego Lopez Rivera, Juan Coronel Rivera Grandsons of Diego Rivera & Guadalupe Rivera Marin, Daughter of Diego Rivera, January 17th & 18th, 2007, Mexico City

Por favor, dígame su nombre y apellidos y su parentesco con Diego Rivera.

Please Say your name and who you are

1. ¿Tiene algunos recuerdos de su abuelo?

1. Do you have any memories of your grandfather?

2. ¿Su mamá le habló alguna vez de lo que le pasó al mural de Rivera en Nueva York?

¿Qué le dijo?

2. Did your mother ever discuss the episode of Rivera's mural in New York, and if so what did he say?

3. ¿Cuál piensa usted que es el significado social y político del mural hoy día?

3. What do you think about the social and political significance of this mural today?

4. En el mural se retrata a los trabajadores sin empleo haciendo cola para recibir unos mendrugos de pan y también a la policía golpeando a los manifestantes y a los soldados con máscaras de gas durante los años 30. ¿Cómo ve usted las circunstancias del México de hoy en relación con los 30?

4. The mural depicts poor workers waiting in the breadline during the 1930s.

Unemployment, the police beating protestors, soldiers marching in gas masks. How do you see the economic circumstances of Mexico today in relation to the circumstances of the 1930s? Can you tell me if/where this is visible today here in Mexico?

5. Decía su abuelo que el secreto de su arte estaba en que era esencialmente mexicano y que cuanto más nativo es el arte más pertenece al mundo. ¿Me puede decir hasta qué punto la visión de su abuelo para con la belleza de la cultura mexicana es una visión global?

5. Your grandfather said that the secret of his art was that it was inherently Mexican and that the more native art is the more it belongs to the world. Can you tell me more about your Grandfather's vision to look within at the beauty of Mexican culture as an example for the world?

6. En el mural Rivera muestra al hombre como heredero de la tierra y a los trabajadores de las ciudades y del campo como conocedores de su papel social. ¿Qué parecido ve usted en esto con el México de hoy?

6. In his mural Rivera shows man inheriting the earth, the workers of the cities and the country understanding their role in contributing to society. How do you see this as an analogy for contemporary Mexico?

7. ¿Cuál es el significado hoy día del propósito del mural de combinar la ciencia y la innovación tecnológica en una visión ética de esperanza para el futuro? ¿Qué relevancia tiene hoy día esta visión para México y el mundo?

7. What is the significance today of this mural's message to combine science and technological innovation to propose an ethical vision of hope for the future? How is this vision relevant today for Mexico and the world?

8. El mural retrata al hombre con acceso a información que abre paso a la sabiduría y a un futuro más risueño. Mucho antes del invento de Internet, Rivera se imaginó este mural como una proyección hacia un acceso mayor y más fácil a la información abriendo paso a la sabiduría. ¿Qué significado tiene esta idea hoy día para los niños pobres sin acceso a la enseñanza, o sea, las generaciones jóvenes de los países del subdesarrollados?

8. The mural depicts man with access to information that can lead to knowledge and a brighter future. Well before the Internet, Rivera envisioned this mural (to) proposing greater and easier access to information resulting in knowledge. What does this mean for the poor uneducated children, the young generation of developing countries today?

9. ¿Hasta qué punto podría ser este mural una expresión de "Esperanza y Amplia Visión" para el México de hoy?

9. How could this mural be a vision of "Hope and High Vision" for Mexico today?

10. Teniendo en cuenta la visión del futuro de su abuelo, ¿cómo ve usted la posibilidad de que México y los EEUU colaboren para mejorar algunos de los asuntos presentados en este mural?

10. Looking at your grandfather's vision for the future how do you see Mexico and the United States (relationship in) [collaborating to] improve some of the issues illustrated in this mural?

Por ejemplo:

--que los trabajadores lleguen a entender sus derechos laborales

--una mayor comprensión de los usos de la tecnología para mejorar la sociedad

--promulgar el desarrollo económico entre los dos países

--una mayor/mejor comprensión del medio ambiente de parte del ser humano

For example:

- The workers arriving at an understanding of their rights in relationship to labor.
- A better understanding of how to use technology for improving society
- A better understanding of how to teach for the future
- Fostering economic development between these countries
- Human understanding of the natural environment

11. ¿Han mejorado en México las circunstancias que he descrito? ¿Qué debe hacerse?

11. Have these circumstances improved in Mexico? What should be done?

12. ¿Quién cree usted que representa el papel del hombre en la encrucijada hoy día en México? El emigrante mirando hacia el otro lado de la frontera esperando un mejor futuro allí? O será la gente indígena mirando hacia adentro esperando un mejor futuro aquí?

12. Who might best represent the role of Man at the Crossroads today in Mexico? Is it the immigrant the border looking with hope to a better future on the other side?

Or is it the native people looking within for a better future here?

13. Cómo ve su rol como descendiente de su abuelo, y su rol como visionarios? Cómo se puede preservar su visión y legado para usarse con las generaciones futuras?

13. As a direct descendent of this great artist- how do you see your relationship to this mural, and their role as artistic visionaries? What is your role as the guardian of their legacy?

14. ¿Tiene usted algún comentario adicional o alguna anécdota que quisiera contarme?  
14. Do you have any additional comments or anecdotes that you wish to share?



**Juan Coronel Rivera** is the grandson of Diego Rivera and the son of influential Mexican painter Raphael Coronel. He is an important scholar on the work of his grandfather and an influential collector and curator. He is currently working with Taschen to release a commemorative edition of the entire body of Rivera's work for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Rivera's death. I visited him in his home in San Angel Mexico City on January 17<sup>th</sup>.

Juan Coronel Responds (Edited)

My complete name is Juan Rafael Coronel Rivera, and I am Diego Rivera's grandson.

The mural in a sense is actually divided in two pieces. It is the communist world that was developed in peace, trying to make some laws for protection of the workers and the other side we have the capitalism with the wars, with invasions and the science working for the development of machine guns, and armament in general. If you saw the mural just like that, well yes it's only a political statement of communism and capitalism in the 30s, but this was not the idea. The statement was to focus on man in the center as the developer of his own history. We are the ones who can work with us as persons in a world to make a better achievement of whatever the world can go. And the point of view of Rivera is that the idea of the war was not a correct idea to develop the consciousness of mankind.

The understanding of Diego through arts was through French culture. One of the very interesting things around him is that he never speaks English, he always speaks French. So this is incredible in the 20<sup>th</sup> century where everybody speaks English. So when Diego came to Mexico, of course, being a Mexican he had a huge knowledge of Mexican culture. His approach to all the local arts was not as a Mexican. It was as a French artist. He took the essence of Mexican art, through the ideas, the same ideas and the same philosophical position as the French people took the ideas from the African art. That is a completely different point of view of what was going on in Mexico. When he states that the most essential ideas of art are in the most primitive or essential ideas of art, here in Mexico, the Pre-Colombian art he was making a statement exactly like a European would. He was trying to get the real essence of art, to put it through a modern viewpoint. The most important thing is that Diego really developed this part of art, he really put modern art and Indian art, he made a mixture and he developed a new complete style that influenced during 20s, 30s, 40s the complete aesthetic of the whole world, the

United States, France, and of course all Latin America started doing some of the works, not obviously all the art, but a part of the art was very influenced by Diego's aesthetics. In the moment, in the 30s, when he made his one man show in the museum of modern art in New York Diego, Picasso and Matisse were considered the three leading artists at that point. Why, because there were the three points of view of what art was in the moment, Political, the innovation through Picasso, and the decoration through Matisse. So when Diego made his first statement around the local Indians. The first statement he did was taking the essence of this art and bringing through modernity. And that's the most important part of Diego through modern art that he developed muralism that was the first movement that the whole continent gave to the modern art movement. That is something that, I think, we have to say more, here in Mexico. The first movement developed in America, in the whole continent was muralism, and it was the first movement that really impacted all of modern art.

The first thing that we have seen in this mural is that the mural of the Rockefeller Center is not a mural related to Mexico. This is a mural related to the United States.

Since Marx Capitalism Marx established that the first country that can go through the real communism was the United States, because it was the only country that was really developed, really developed, developed in science, developed in economic structure, developed in architecture. They have huge and strong unions in the 30s and the next step that the Americans can do was to go to this equality of society, because Communism is not to take everything from everybody and status-ize everything. It's an idealistic position but the idea was to establish like a standard of a way of life for everybody. So what Diego's establishing in this mural is precisely that idea, that the United States was the most important point of the world that can happen the real communism, as communism was understood. So if I see the mural, for example, if you really analyze the mural you find that, for example, there is not any Mexican in the mural. Most of the workers are European refugees. If you see the faces of all these persons that are there most of them are Polish, you can see German's, there is all these people that were establishing themselves in the United States, and during what they call now, the melting pot. And it's what Diego established there, it is the science, the universe, and the myth of man.

Here we have to go through Diego's ideas of development. They are very particular ideas. The first thing we have to know is that Diego was a mason. Here in Mexico, he found a lodge that still exists, which is called, "Logia Xetacuatl". And actually we have some photos of Diego inside the lodge dressed doing these Masonic rituals so we don't have any doubt about that and he also painted some of the works for the Lodge. This is very important, especially in this mural, because his idea of how the world is divided and developed comes from two points of view that, we the ink from our history can be absolutely opposite, that is communism and masonry. But through Diego's eyes he thinks that they were actually the same thing, because masonry and communism were trying to put man in the next step of development, of spiritual development, and of evolution in the sense of intellectual evolution. So what he does in this mural is to get together these two ideas through this person that is in the center of the mural, that is this white guy, controlling the universe, through science and knowledge and masonry and communism is based on knowledge and here we have to establish the concept of knowledge, the knowledge of the philosophical essence of knowledge. Not only of knowing facts, but of knowing the essence of the world, the structure of the universe. That's what he was trying to explain in this mural and the idea is that the development of man is not in creating a structure to exploit man, but to educate man. The essence of the growth of the humanity was based on the science and the sciences show in the schools and through labor. Labor is a strong essence of man. So that's the complete concept of this painting. Its man trying to focus on their next step of evolution.

I think that Diego with this model was trying to make the same statement that Michel Angelo tried to do with his David. He got this male to amplify the society of that moment, because it was, a very, virile guy, strong, healthy, a good male representative of the whole humanity, in his better age. And Diego has the same point of view as Michel Angelo, with the David. It's not this biblical scene that Michel Angelo was trying to represent. It was this scene of humankind during the renaissance.

In America, in the continent, the social movement its completely different than the 30s. The United States in the 30s was going through a Europeanization. All the immigrants were going to the United States were Polish or German or Swedish, Italians. Right now they're Latin's, so if Diego has to develop this mural again, he will, I think, he should not put an Anglo Saxon person, as the leading control of the machine, he should put

something from Latin America, because right now the complete social structure is changing and you can notice this everywhere. It's not something that's good or bad, or it's not a fact that the government can control, because mestizaje is something that happens. Its like, for example, here in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, we said that we started our mestizaje, and we developed the structure of the society that we are in right now, this combination between the Indians and the Spanish. Through the years and through the story and the development of the story of what Mexico is, now we know that we have, like 20% of African Mexican blood, all of us, because in Mexico people mixed its not like in the states that they stay separate. And we have also a very high percentage of Arabs, because most of the persons that come through in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century to Mexico were persons from Arabic conditions that changed from Christianity to come Mexico and start a new life, well t6 New Spain, in those days. And what is happening now is something that it happened by population. The Americans are coming to Mexico and the Mexicans are going to the states and they mixed. So the next step between the nations is to make a new mestizaje and this is something that even though with laws or whatever its not going to be possible to stop. It's going to happen. It's happening. We have like 10 million Americans, because the Americans they are always saying, well we have now 20 million Mexicans, yes but they did not say that we have 10 million Americans in Mexico so its going to happen. So the structure that Diego paints in the mural is no the structure of the United States anymore, also. The structure of the United States its completely different of the structure that he said in this painting.

Diego Rivera is not only my grandfather he is like the grandfather of all the Mexican's and I structure this following this tradition from the Mochicas the Najwa's that there was this big veneration for the old people, because the old people were the ones who had the knowledge and of course Diego has this enormous knowledge of humanity, he was really a genius. And we have to learn a lot around him, of his ideas, of his painting, of the structure of how he paints because he was really a humanist, like in the sense of the Renaissance and I think that whatever the next step of humanity should be, it should be by re- looking at the essence of the Renaissance to see again through the man, not through economics, or armaments or oil, we have to see again through the soul of humanity otherwise we are going to become extinct and that's a fact, its happening.

In general what I rescue is a composition and the color. The statement was a very risky statement for those days and right now its only history if we base ourselves in the statement. If we see the painting as a complete thing with a very rapid eye I think yes its too crowded but that was his style. If we see it in sections there some portraits that are masterpieces, there are some heads so strongly well painted that its amazing how he can develop how he can develop all the states of being of the humanity. The idea of the mural was very good because as you know the mural was going to be set in a place where the elevators were going to be coming and Diego put the mural floating, that its incredible because he knew well if I am going to do a fresco well I am not going to put it through the walls because it going to crack. I mean nobody thinks that we he does a mural and Diego was really clever and smart for doing this. He put the mural floating, he developed the mural in three sections so you can really have a whole perspective as though you are waling though the mural, because it was not a static piece, because Diego in some of the murals you have the wall, you have the front wall and the only position that you can see that mural, is to see it from the front, a little bit like a three dimensional piece, but this piece that he developed for the Rockefeller Center you can consider it as a painting mixed with sculpture, because you can go through the sides to see the painting. You have a position of the left and of the right and of the center and you can walk through all the painting. And the vision of the people that are involved in the painting follows you so Diego's idea of this concept was very interesting, because he can do a flat painting only painting the front, but he developed the whole concept

When the Rockefeller family hires a communist artist obviously the result of whatever you are going to get is a communist painting. When Diego made his statement through the Rockefeller family he had already the complete mural that for me is one of the best murals he ever did, the one in Detroit. And if you saw that mural, well that mural was a communist statement so whatever you get in New York is going to be something related to this point of view. Going through the Rockefeller archives, now we know that the Rockefeller family, especially Abby, she knew that Lenin was going to be in the mural. And there are some scholars that also state that maybe she was the one who says to Diego that she wants Lenin in the mural. I don't know the political background, because if you are doing a mural in the most important point, of the most important city, of the most powerful nation, obviously the American government was involved in the complete concept of all the structure of the Rockefeller Center. This was not just a rich man trying

to develop a landmark in New York. This was part of the complete idea of the country as the United States developed. So I think that the other story of this mural that we haven't researched is maybe in the archives of the CIA because even though, right now we know, for example, that most of the art figurative, political art, of the 50s were retired through an order of the CIA, we have all the papers right now out. So I think there should be something in that archive that can tell us what at the end frightened them or put the Rockefeller family through the position of destroying the mural. My supposition is that it was part of the publicity of the United States government of strength through pointing that Capitalism was so strong that they can even destroy a work made by a communist and nothing happened.

If you saw the structure of the universe and if you saw the structure of a cell, they are exactly the same. The nuclear structure of a cell, the atom, the neutrons have the same principles as, for example, our solar system, and through these glasses Diego was trying to make this metaphor. We are exactly the same essence. What you have in a macro view and what you have in a micro view through the microscope and the telescope are exactly the same; it's the human structure, and the structure of the universe.

**Sal Daguarda** was depicted in Diego Rivera's 1940 San Francisco Mural Pan American Unity. At 86 he is attempting to rebuild the Pacifica Statue that was designed for the San Francisco 1940 Panama Pacific Exposition that he participated in as a 20-year-old swimmer. He discusses the influence of the mural and his vision to recreate the Pacifica Statue.

Interview Questions for Sal Daguarda, January 29<sup>th</sup> Concord, California

How did you come to be illustrated in Diego Rivera's 1940 Panama Pacific mural, Pan American Unity?

My name is Sal Dargurda and I was a swimmer at Treasure Island in the 1940 Panama Pacific Exposition with the Billy Rose Aquacade and my first time spotting Diego Rivera was when we went in this hall one of the empty buildings but I thought he was just some guy with graffiti going on the walls. I had no idea who he was. I didn't meet him or anything but watched him for a while and one day we were coming out of the water which is in this picture here and three of us, Clyde Divine on this side, me in the middle and George Winberg on the side. They are both gone now. They died several years ago. We came out of the water and a fellow came up and took a picture of us and we asked what he was going to do with that and he said we are going to try to do some painting with it. He didn't say too much he just took the pictures and left and then later on is when we found out, in fact, years later that was the picture that went into the mural. So that's about the size of getting into the mural.

My friend Bob Seward talked about the mural and all of a sudden it came back to me when I was going through my pictures that I was making up to put into a shop to leave there and all of a sudden it dawned on me. That was the picture that was taken when whomever it was representing Diego Rivera came in and took our picture and that's when we decided that there was two us up there. Clyde Divine, we think Diego turned his hair blonde. He couldn't have liked the black hair and so he became a blonde. Since then it's been a whole new life to me because I was never much into the arts but I've got a whole new appreciation for the arts now.

Can you talk again about your memories and how you were photographed and included in the mural?

One day after a show we were coming out of the water, because you swim and then you exit out a tunnel. As we were coming out of that tunnel there was a fellow there with a camera and he snapped some pictures of us and we said we wanted copies, kidding around with him, and we'll take two of each. So he said, "I'll get you a copy of it". So he did and I managed to keep the one copy, which I showed earlier and the other one. Somebody said, I think there is a guy from next door where they're painting, but I didn't pay any attention to it until years later when after I met Bob and the mural came up, because I had never seen the mural until after that and that's when I looked at it and I was segregating my pictures which I was giving to San Francisco City College for their archives. I made copies from the World's Fair and all the swimmers so that they could put it in the collection and that's when I ran across it and I said, gee that's the picture they took when they put it in the mural and that's how we discovered that I was in the mural.

We never heard anything about the mural with Rivera until after I met Bob Seward and then he gave a lecture and then he took me over to the college and I saw the mural on the wall and all of a sudden, its almost like, my heart started pumping like here was a whole new thing in my life that just started all over again. And so between that mural and the statue and the help of the art department over there we started seriously going to work on the statue and I've been working hard at it now, one for Pacifica and one will go in the Frida Kahlo garden at City College. It's right outside where the mural is inside the auditorium.

How has being depicted here affected your life? Can you talk about your current project and why you have been doing this?

What I am working on at the present time is. There was a statue, an 80 ft statue called Pacifica and the navy, when they took over in 1941, they tore the statue down because they wanted to make room for the height, because the airport was going on Treasure Island and so at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Exposition I was with Dave Mackleadden and I said to Dave I am going to rebuild that statue. So about 10 years ago was when I started putting the statue together and we kept waiting for the navy to turn it back to San Francisco and they finally did this last year and I made some models. I've got some



three-foot models, which the City of Pacifica loaned me. We made castings from there and now I am in the process of making two eight footers one will go on the entry to the city hall at Pacifica and the other will go at City College. City College was very helpful to me in everything I've done or been working on because its related to the mural.

This is going to be my legacy and my kid's legacy and the legacy of the people that are working on Treasure Island redevelopment and I'm not going to give up on it. The statue is going to be built come hell nor high water and that's why I've slept it, dreamed about it, you name it, I've built the statue thousands of times in my dreams and with the mural and the people I've met though the mural I think it's all leading into my road to building the statue and the eight footers that we are doing now its just the beginning and its just a way of getting to more publicity to put it on Treasure Island because it could go to Treasure Island immediately. We don't have to wait for the re-development of Treasure Island, because as my son said, Dad, every time there's a baseball game or a football game at Oakland or San Francisco, when that blimp flies over the top, they're going to be showing that statue and everybody watching those games all around the world, not just San Francisco or Oakland but the world will see that statue. My daughter says, Dad, he's right that's going to be the statue of liberty of the west coast and so my hope is to keep going and growing and my daughter says don't ever give up on it dad. So that's what's keeping me going is that statue and it'll get done.

Can you talk about the meaning of the Pacifica Statue?

The statue of Liberty stands for the European countries coming to America but the Pacific statue was like the welcoming statue here to he Asian Countries and the Pacific Rim and that's why the figure is not anyone person. You can take it for whatever part of the Pacific you want to see. It was at the opposite end of the Sun Tower, which was a tall building on Treasure Island and the two were facing each other. Practically anyone that's ever gone to the fair can remember the statue or Pacifica. It has something when you look at it, a feeling of part of your life, a meaning. I look at it and it brings back the thoughts of my days then. I look at my statue and it makes me feel like I am looking at the same person.

**James Sherley** is an associate Professor of Biological Engineering at MIT. At the time of this interview he is currently undertaking a hunger strike to protest the status of his tenure, which he disputes, is prejudiced by racism. This interview is taking place on the second day of his hunger strike on February 6<sup>th</sup>. I arrive in his office, which is populated by reporters waiting telephone calls from the BBC requests for interviews on Democracy Now. Professor Shirley invites me to his office and I proceed to link Rivera's mural with his research in stem cell biology.

Interview with Professor of Biological Engineering, James Sherley, MIT Biological Engineering, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2007

Please say your name and who you are:

1. Can you tell me about your research here at MIT? Can you explain your work in adult stem cell biology towards advances in cell and tissue engineering, gene therapy, cancer diagnostics, cancer treatment, and toxicology?
2. In his mural Rivera shows man in the possession of science and technology that will lead to a new and more ethical future. How do you see your work in stem cell research as a contribution to a more ethical future? How do you see your work as a contribution for future society? What are its implications of this research for the future and younger generations? What is the potential of your research to contribute to the world and humanity?
3. Despite their medical promise, stem cells have been dogged by political and ethical controversy because some are derived from discarded human embryos, and because of fears and confusion about links with human reproductive cloning. Can you discuss these ethical, political, and technical obstacles that make your work and contributions to real therapies difficult?
4. This mural depicts man in the possession of technology and science that will lead to a new and better future, but unsuccessful without an accompanying social and ethical development. Is the world ready for the implications of tissue engineering, cloning, and embryonic stem cell development?

5. How are the religious and theological and philosophical debates surrounding embryonic research affecting your work?
6. In his mural Rivera illustrates the work of the scientists who watch over the development of a new generation that is protected by the work of the teachers. How do you see your role work as a teacher and scientist paving the way with new discoveries and innovations in adult stem cell development?
7. Are you turning to molecular biology as a moment in the production of scientific knowledge or scientific objectivity as means of addressing larger cultural and racial issues?
8. Do you make the connection with segregating stem cells with cultural or racial segregation?
9. The prominent central segment of the mural shows greatly magnified germs, genetic modification, and the microbes of various diseases in vivid colors that suck energy from living organisms. How might this be an analogy for fear and confusion over stem cell research that is connected with human reproductive cloning?
10. The diseases are arranged so that the bacilli begin near the social scene, where the infectious and hereditary germs of society. At the tops the microbes are given life by the poisonous gases of war, and toward the other end of the ellipse are the germs of the infectious and hereditary social diseases. How do you see your work
11. What's President Bush's position on the stem-cell debate? Although he has restricted embryonic stem cell research this does not affect adult stem cell research or does it? What do you think of his position?
12. The debate over embryonic stem cell research blurs the conventional lines between conservatives and liberals. What is your role in demystifying the

### James Sherley Responds (Edited)

It turns out that our research touches on all of those, I think maybe 5 topics and I'll try to give a brief explanation for why that's true. Our work focuses on working on some major problems in stem cell biology. These are the cells that are responsible for generating adult tissues. They are rare, hard isolate, difficult to grow. So we are working on identifying them, developing methods to expand them in large numbers and by having them in large numbers we can study their properties and functions. Those properties are relevant to many things in tissue biology. Adult stem cells are thought to be the primary cell in human tissues that are transformed to become cancer cells. In toxicology, for instances, things like chemotherapy, stems cells are thought to be the primary cell in human tissues that become transformed to form human tumors. So they are relevant to cancer biology. There are cells that are often injured by chemotherapy agents that lead to the toxicities of chemotherapy and therefore they are important targets for toxicology that lead to diseases like cancer, because they are responsible for renewing the body there viability is relevant to processes like ageing. Another thing in terms or gene therapy. One of the important needs in gene therapy is the cell that you can deliver the genes to the person in, and you need genes cells to have a long life, and that give rise to other cells that can express the gene's and that's what adult stem cells do so that's what makes adult stem cells one of the main targets of cells that have been sought after for the purposes of gene therapy.

The first one is that this is basic biology. This understanding how cells work and stem cells are a pretty special type of cell in the body and understanding how stems cells work and how they function we learn something about ourselves. The ultimate stem cell if you think about it in the body are the stem cells that are responsible for producing new human beings, are the germ cells the gametes and again they a type of stem cell biology that by understanding them we can learn things about ourselves. Now one of the things that science hopes to do is to, especially science that goes onto engineering technology is to improve the quality of human life. One of the things that we al recognize is that we suffer from diseases and we suffer from both genetic diseases and also infectious diseases and we suffer from the changes that happen to the body over time which can lead to debilitating diseases. Since adult stem cells are responsible for the production and repair of tissues they might be useful for treating tissues that are diseased. So one of our goals is to be able to enable that type of cellular therapy by producing methods for

13. Can you discuss your understanding of Adult Stem cells and the human body to regenerate and “remember” the original organ and original self?
14. How are adult stem cells grown in the lab? Can you explain how parent cells may be passed onto daughter cells through a process of chromosome segregation?
15. How are the religious and theological and philosophical debates surrounding embryonic research affecting your work?
16. As a biologist working in evolutionary science how do you see yourself to in relation to those who have come before you, your predecessors and forefathers in biology? How does your work fit in with older modes of thought such as Darwinism?
17. Rivera’s mural shows Man at the Crossroads, Looking with Hope and High Vision to a New and Better Future. Man is in possession of knowledge that will lead to a more informed future. Do you see small-undeveloped embryos as having the same precious life as fully developed humans?
18. Can you discuss the living potential of this underdeveloped embryo? Please explain the process of bringing this embryo from a byproduct of life, to developing something that lives and breaths like the rest of us?
19. In his mural from the central atom emanates and vibrates the living energy of the universe. Dormant energy is transformed and conducted into living energy. How might you see this as an analogy for your work of for the vibrating cells combining precious life?
20. Can you discuss this situation of MIT to refuse your tenure and how this makes your work more relevant?

expanding adult stem cells in large numbers. If you are going to use adult stem cells for treatments you are need to have them in large numbers for two reasons, one to study them to learn how to do new therapies, develop new therapies and you also need them for those therapies.

In terms of how this research can lead to a more ethical world. This is the first time I've thought about that question and I think because we are right now at a time where there is a divide between two types of stem cells, embryonic stem cells and adult stem cells. Embryonic stem cells require that human embryos be destroyed and human embryos they are living human beings and their destruction is unethical. Adult stem cell biology provides an alternative to that so even though they are in a same general field of stem cell biology adult stem cells give us an opportunity to have those desires, cellular therapies without the ethical dilemma of what to do about embryos used for embryonic stem cell research. In terms of going forward I think as we delve more and more into research that involves human subjects we have to think more and more and be more creative about how to maintain ethically responsible research.

It would be interesting to think about if this mural were redone and the organisms were in fact embryos and we can see how there is a war going on around embryos now. It's not a physical war with guns but it is a war of ethics and one of the features of that war is human life. Embryonic stem cell debate is in fact derivative of the abortion debate. It's an unresolved conflict in our country and so, if you were going to replace that here, you could have two issues here. The people who are fighting about it, who tend to be well off, and the people who are being effected by it who tend to be poor and so the embryonic stem cell issue has this feature too, because one of the concerns is that you need to have egg donors, women, to have this type of research. One of the big concerns is that women who are poor will be exploited to learn things to develop new technologies that will be used primarily by people that can afford these technologies who have not given up their life, energy, for the development of those technologies. So there maybe some parallels there, in terms of what's displayed.

We shouldn't kill innocent human beings no matter what form they are in. At their earliest development right out of the egg and the sperm form or when they are fetuses or when

they are newborns, or when they're adults. This is something that our society shouldn't do and the President has really stood firm on that.

It's the great mystery that we like to understand. It's a remarkable process that a cell can divide and one of the cells become something different and the other cell not change at all. Throughout development there are lots of examples in the developing embryos, for instance, where there's a cell division and both the cells are different than one another but they're not like the original cell. So the ability to do this is the essence of memory and life. It's what our germ cells do if you think about it. We don't live forever but our DNA can live for eons as long as we are able, as long as it's able to be propagated from one person to another and so we try to understand what is the process by which a cell can remember what it was and maintain that while producing something differently is what we'd like to try to understand and it's what we work on. There are no understandings right now. There's some molecular ideas about this, in terms of how cells can configure their DNA and not change it, but what happens is if the DNA is configured in a state for the stem cell when that cell divides the entire DNA has to be opened up and copied again and how can these states be maintained. It's a very exciting problem to be trying to address.

I just want to point out one other thing about stem cells. There is this idea that cells age and if you talk about ageing in tissues, that ageing that's relevant it's got to be ageing that's happening in the stem cell. So how do you talk about something getting older when it just made something completely new, every time. One of the things that we study in this laboratory is one molecular basis for how that can happen. It has to do with the two strands of DNA. So one of the things that we've shown in our research and that was proposed in 1975 by John Cairns is that what a stem cell is able to do when it divides is its DNA has two strands that are different age. What the stem cell is able to do when the new molecules are made is to take the new molecules that have the oldest DNA strands and retain it. So it's non-random chromosome segregation, which violates a basic tenant in all of a million biology. By doing this the stem cell can avoid mutations that may cause cancer is the hypothesis. But it maybe that those old DNA molecules number one have the information for what a stem cell is and number two, because, those DNA molecules can undergo chemical change and chemical damage, it is that damage that leads to ageing in the bodies. That's why we are so excited about studying

these cells because they are at the nexus between disease like cancer and ageing, which come together in human beings. So by studying this process we may be able to learn exactly what's going on and one of things we've got as a hope is that by making a stem cell occasionally, now this is getting outside of science and into science fiction, but if you can make the stem cell occasionally release its old DNA strands, you might get longer life span, the cost of doing that would be a greater risk for tumor formation though.



**Noam Chomsky** is an influential Linguist, Philosopher, Political Activist and Professor emeritus at MIT. I posed several questions to him linking the contents of the mural with contemporary political activities in Latin America namely Venezuela and Mexico. Chomsky was intrigued to learn more about the project particularly because the contents and episode was of interest to him however he declined to talk directly about the mural.

Interview Questions for Professor Noam Chomsky, Friday February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007, 12:45pm to 1:45pm, Office 32-D840, MIT

Please Say your name and who you are:

1. It seems to be very clear that the circumstances that led Rivera to produce the unfinished mural are still very much alive. In Latin American new leaders are proposing alternatives to America's capitalist system with Chavez in Venezuela, and Morales, in Bolivia proposing, as Rivera says, a "High Vision" for the South of this continent. Can you talk about leaders such as Chavez in Venezuela, Morales in Bolivia and how they are proposing alternatives to Americas capitalist system?

Other Campaign

2. In Mexico, Subcomandante Marcos, and the Other Campaign are calling for an end to globalism. His group, the Zapatista revolutionary army who's name comes from the Mexican revolution of 1912, that Rivera once supported, are active in Mexico's poorest state Chiapas. They demand that the indigenous peoples of Chiapas be respected and their culture and tradition be fairly treated in a land governed by the Mexican and foreign companies. This is reminiscent of the 1930s when Nelson Rockefeller began to foster economic development in Mexico, and the indigenous peoples lands were being exploited. Later, another Rockefeller suggested that Mexico joined NAFTA (1994), a factor that eventually led many Indians to be forced off their traditional lands, face starvation, and migrate north to seek work in the United States. This country on the other hand is planning to build a wall on the border.

Question:

Rivera's mural shows the workers of the cities and country inheriting the earth. Along with privatization of public resources, and autonomy for indigenous peoples the Other

Campaign is calling to redraft the Mexican constitution to reorganize Mexican society into a more equal system. How do you see the Other Campaigns plans? What will this mean for the indigenous and disenfranchised people of Mexico and other Latin American countries?

#### Border Fence

3. With President Bush's signing of legislation authorizing the construction of a 700-mile border barrier, Rivera's Rockefeller mural, Man at the Crossroads Looking with Hope and High Vision to New and More Ethical Future, presents an alternative socialist and communist vision for the US, where the American and Latin American governments and people may work together. How do you see this vision today, considering Bush's plan to build the 700-mile border barrier?

#### Mexico & US

4. Next week 7 Mexican diplomats will for the first time in Mexico's history, be coming to Washington to discuss policies on migration. This is a vital moment for both governments to consider a lasting collaborative effort for Mexican's, who, like in Rivera's mural, "Look with Hope and High Vision to a New and Better Future", on the other side. How may PAN and Republicans effectively work together on this issue?

#### Castro & Cuba

5. Fidel Castro may be in his last moments of life, after nearly 50 years in power. How do you see this moment in US-Cuba relations? What will the end of his reign mean for building diplomatic relations between the US and Cuba? How do you see the future of Cuba? What will happen with Cuba when Fidel is gone? Without economic certainty, a large poor population and the end of Fidel, Cuba's communist regime may be ready to collapse, especially with Bush's obsession with ending the Castro regime. What will this end mean for the United States?

#### 6. Puerto Rico

The "Father of the Modern Puerto Rico" Luis Muñoz Marín introduced what was meant as a temporary status for Puerto Rico between statehood and independence. This status has been prolonged and accepted as a norm for many years. How should the status of

Puerto Rico be resolved now? Should Puerto Rico, Cuba and Santo Domingo work together work to form the "3 Antilles"?

#### Global World and Poverty

7. With the world quickly globalizing, large scale advances in global technology, and attempts to develop the underdeveloped and alleviate poverty, over the last 50 years the world has experienced more poverty than ever before. Every year more people go without food and hundreds of millions of people remain without homes. The world's most powerful country, the United States, also experiences hunger with the richest 5% controlling almost 60% of the net worth of all of the population. Again there are wars as the United States responds to September 11<sup>th</sup> with invasions in Afghanistan, Iraq, and a reoccurring crisis in the Middle East. China is developing, and in Latin America there are again signs of communist revolution. With its scenes of impending war, and tragedy, as well as visions for a better future, Man at the Crossroads Looking with Hope and High Vision to a New and Better Future, seems just as appropriate today as it did then. Do you agree?

#### Trotsky

8. Trotsky illustrated in this mural, holds a banner, proclaiming, "Workers of the World Unite in the Fourth International. He argued for a vanguard party and new form of Communism, the Fourth International that would lead to a world revolution and would be built in opposition to the Capitalists and the Stalinists. Can you tell me more about the beginning of the fourth international during the 1930s when it was gaining support in Bolivia, Vietnam and Sri Lanka? What was Trotsky revolutionary vision for democratic socialism? Is this vision still relevant today?

### Noam Chomsky Responds (Edited)

First of all Chavez and Morales are demonized in a specific way in the US doctrinal system and correspondingly in Europe, but they are just part of a wave that is taking place in south America, they are in some ways the leading edge of it. In south America from Venezuela to Argentina, with only a few exceptions, there are, taking place, some of the most, I think, exciting, developments in the world. This is the first time since the Spanish Conquest, the half millennium, that the South American Countries are beginning to move towards some degree of integration, over many obstacles and plenty of problems and integration is a pre requisite for a successful move towards independence from foreign domination.

There are two fundamental respects in which Latin America has to work towards integration, both of them residues of the colonial conquests and the aftermath. One is that the countries have been separated from one another. I mean it's even true or transport systems and so on, very little interrelation among them. Furthermore there is an internal dichotomy, a very sharp dichotomy, one of the worst in the world, between quite small, very wealthy, mostly Europeanized, often white elite, on the one hand, and a mass of the population, sometimes with extreme poverty, Indian, Black, Asteco, the lines are fairly sharp, not rigid but pretty clear and the gap between them is enormous, it's the worst in the world, or close to it and that is also for the first time being overcome to an extent and one of the most impressive parts of it, is that its being overcome in many places, by mass popular movements. So in Brazil, for example, Lula came to the Presidency on the wave of an enormous and effective, popular movements. The landless workers movement, which is distinct from its workers party but is, loosely connected to the workers party itself, his actions have to a significant extent, disappointed them, but nevertheless he's a part of that system. In Bolivia, Bolivia had a remarkable democratic election, of a kind, that can't really be envisioned in the United States or any industrial society. It was not as December 2005, sharply distinct from the US election, a year earlier. The election involved mass popular participation, the issues were stark and clear and significant. People knew what the issues were. They didn't show up just on Election Day, they had been struggling about these issues for years. Control over resources, water, others. And they elected someone from their own ranks, an Indian, Morales, Evo Morales. And this is part of the Indigenous population has been

extremely marginalized and oppressed, coalescing also across borders to a certain extent, there's talk of an Indian Nation. Again there are very sharp splits in the society but those are impressive developments and the US is very worried about them. For a long time the US has largely dominated the region and there have been two major mechanisms of domination, one is violence and the other is economic strangulation and they're both losing their effectiveness, because of the mass mobilization and the moves toward integration.

The countries are, as the President of Argentina, put it, ridding themselves of the IMF. The IMF is essentially a branch of the treasury department and they are moving towards economic independence, they are paying of their debts. In the case of Argentina and Bolivia with the help of Venezuela, Brazils doing it too. There's just a general loss of control. The US is reacting in many ways. A part of the reaction, to get back to your original question, is to try to introduce a sharp separation between the good left and the bad left. So the good left is Lula, Garcia, a couple of others, and the bad left is Venezuela, Morales, maybe Correa in Ecuador. Like all propaganda there's something to it, but, in order to maintain that party line its necessary to suppress a good deal of information consciously, for example, well the fact that when Lula was re-elected last October, his first foreign trip, one of his first acts, was to visit Caracas, to offer support for Chavez's electoral campaign to dedicate joint Venezuelan, Brazilian projects and to discuss others. A couple of weeks later there was a meeting in Cochabamba, which is right in the heart of the Popular activist movements in Bolivia. A meeting of all the Latin American leaders, to discuss the move towards integration. There had been hostility between Garcia and Chavez but that was apparently overcome. None of this gets discussed. It simply doesn't fit the required picture. There's a lot more, but yes, Venezuela and Bolivia are, and they are leading the, Venezuela, in particular, the move, towards, some kind of hemispheric integration. How far it'll go is hard to say. There are many obstacles, both to the integration among countries and the internal problem of extreme wealth in a narrow sector and huge poverty, but it's much more on the agenda of action than it's been in the past. It's quite significant.

The Zapatista's appeared at the same time that NAFTA was enacted and they made the connection explicit. They described NAFTA as a step towards undermining the rights of indigenous people and also the Mexican poor. Mexico is like other countries of Latin

America, a very sharply divided between a small sector of wealth, and huge poverty. The connection with NAFTA is clear, not only the Zapatista's appeared that year, but the same year, in 1994, Clinton had militarized the border, Operation Gate Keeper. Presumably the reason for coincidence of timing was that NAFTA created the expectation, widely expressed in fact, that it would undermine Mexican agriculture and Mexican manufacturing, small manufacturing. Peasants in Mexico can't possibly compete with huge US agri-business, which gets maybe 40% of its profits from government subsidies. So they'll be driven off the lands and into the cities. Mexican small business can't compete with US Multinationals, which under the terms of NAFTA, have to receive national treatment in Mexico, they have to be treated like Mexican companies. Remember these are not free trade agreements; these are investor rights agreements, totally different thing. So the effect would be to undermine a good bit of the workforce in Mexico. The Campesinos and also the urban and that would probably lead to a flow of people to the north. Well that's pretty much what's been happening and now the Clinton's Operation Gate Keeper has now been expanded to a wall.

Immigration from south to north is not only Mexicans. But also many people fleeing from the devastation, caused by the US terrorist wars in Central America in the 1980s which practically destroyed four countries, killed hundreds of thousands of people and led to economies that can barely survive, without remittances from the north, so its another part of the flow and also from farther south so that's, all of those are connected, the alternative vision that is being proposed by the Zapatista's, by the Obrador opposition, is in some respect similar to the developments that are taking place in south America, the Bolivarian alternative for the America's, the Venezuelan program, which is at the more extreme end, I don't like the word extreme of the spectrum of efforts towards integration and development. All of these are interconnected. They are not identical; there are different problems in different countries. There's the split between indigenous population and poor peasants is different in the different countries. It takes different forms and many other differences, but there's a similar picture. The picture is, we want to take control of our own resources, we want to take control of our own lives, we want real democracy in which there is real participation, we oppose the, there is almost universal opposition to the neo-liberal globalization, the investor rights model of internal integration, which has been a complete disaster in Latin America. The few who escaped it, escaped it by not accepting the rules. Chile for example where the economy still relies very heavily, not

only on, export of primary goods but particularly of, export of copper, of which we're the major copper company, Phidelco, is nationalized, and is apparently very efficient and contributes far more to the state treasury than the private companies, proportional to its output, and so that's been part of the basis for Chile's partial escape to the effects of the neo-liberal program that also introduced the variety of capital controls and so on. But pretty much its been true all over the world that the countries that most rigorously followed these principles, the so-called Washington consensus. The ones that most rigorously followed them are the ones that suffered the most. The countries that ignored them, like East Asia flourished during the same period. You see similar effects inside the United States, which partly followed the rules, very partly. So Reagan, for example, was the most protectionist President in post war American history, doubled protectionist barriers, introduced, escalated the extensive state involvement in the economy, of which most of the high tech economy rests in the United States, again escalated under Reagan, and the usual mechanism, under the framework of military spending. But nevertheless the effects are clear. The last 25 years in the United States, sharply differ from the proceeding 25 years. For the majority of the population real wages, family incomes have stagnated, sometimes declined, while extreme wealth has been concentrated in a very small sector. In fact a fraction for a percent of the population, which is the sort of neo-liberal move, also benefits have been cut and so on. All of these things are happening simultaneously, its not that somebody's directing a single program, but similar developments are taking place. Just where they'll lead you can't predict, but it is a quite novel and promising in many ways for those who care about the fate of the majority of the population.

The problem of, the question of immigration is a complex one, but it cannot be looked at, seriously, in isolation. There's a reason why migration's coming from south to north not from north to south. Similarly in Europe there's a reason why migration's coming from North Africa to Europe and not conversely. Now we all know the reason. It goes back into the history of the imperialist expansion and domination and control. That's very much alive. So take I say NAFTA again. NAFTA, the agreement that was passed and implemented was an executive agreement, the population wasn't in favor of it. In the United States the population was opposed and in Canada the population was opposed and apparently in Mexico too. It was not a free trade agreement. There are highly protectionist elements in it. Many of its elements had nothing to do with trade, like

national treatment for foreign corporations, and much else. In fact it undercut the development mechanisms by which the rich countries had become rich. The sort of trips component, so called, essentially eliminated or reduced the very mechanisms that the rich developed countries had themselves used. What's called the intellectual property rights is introduced a highly protectionist element that's for the benefits of major corporations, pharmaceutical corporations and others, and the United States can't really enter into a free trade agreement. The US economy relies very heavily on the dynamic state sector. I mean certainly everyone at MIT knows that, that's where most of our salaries come from. The state sector is the source, the primary source for innovation, and development research in high tech industry. That was the source of the development of computers, the Internet, civilian aircraft, lasers, by now pharmaceuticals. Almost anywhere you look there's a very major component. An economy that relies heavily on a dynamic state sector can't really ostensibly enter into a free trade agreement, and these are not intended to be free trade agreements. So in fact, the only accurate words in the phrase north American free trade agreement are, North American. Now there were alternatives suggested to NAFTA. They were suggested by congresses research bureau, Office of Technology assessment. They were suggested by the US labor movement, detailed proposals to have, they were in favor of a north American economic integration agreement but not the executive version of NAFTA, which they predicted correctly would lead to low wage, probably low growth economies with low wage, high profit, but the economies harming the majority of the population. The proposed an alternative which, in fact some ideas from the European Union, and other proposals which they felt, and plausibly, I think, would lead to a high wage, high growth, high productivity economy. Well that was, I can't even say it was rejected, but it wasn't even considered. The proposals of congresses research bureau and of the labor movement weren't even reported. I had to do a research project even to find them and they did not enter into the debate. So for example, one of their proposals, borrowed from the European Union experience was to have a preliminary period before integration of compensatory funding and development programs, which would narrow the gap between, Mexico the poor country and the United States and Canada, the rich countries. That was done in Europe, quite successfully so before the European Union was formed, the poorer countries that were going to be introduced, Greece, Portugal, Spain, and Ireland, were given and still receive substantial compensatory funding to narrow the gaps so that when they were integrated into the union they wouldn't be a flood of cheap



labor, undermining the living standards of Northern European workers. To a lesser but still partial extent that was done when the Eastern European countries were integrated. Mexico, the US, Canada's not an identical situation but similar thinking was proposed and developed and could have been implemented. But that's inconsistent with the goal of an investor's rights agreement where the concern is the concentrations of wealth and power, not the effect on the population. But yes that was an alternative and could have been developed and could be pursued and questions like that are at the heart of the immigration debate. You can't discuss immigration seriously without asking why the direction of immigration is as it is and can something be done to overcome that.

## Cuba

Lets focus on one part of the question that's of particular interest or should be to is what it would mean, what Castro's death would mean, with regard to establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba. Well it's a very interesting question. It turns out that the US population is quite strongly in favor of establishing diplomatic relations, I think the latest figures are about, two thirds and in fact these polls on these issues have been taken since the 1970s and with some fluctuation its sort of hovered around the figure like that for 30 years. Now that's a very interesting figure, because people who say that in the poll are deciding, making it up for themselves, they didn't read it, they didn't hear it, nobody talks about it. We were supposed to regard Cuba as an enemy that has to be destroyed, not one with which we enter into diplomatic relations. And in fact, if, these issues were permitted to enter popular discussion the figures would undoubtedly be far higher, but it's not on the agenda. We don't enter into diplomatic relations just because the majority of the populations in favor of it. Incidentally, the same is true right now with regard to Iran. About 75% of the population of the United States is in favor of improving relations with Iran, diplomatic and other relations with Iran and opposed to threats of attack and so on, but that doesn't enter into discussion. Cuba's a particularly interesting case, because not only is the population of the United States in favor of diplomatic relations but its likely there's substantial part of the business community is as well. Energy just to give one illustration, dramatic illustration, Cuba apparently has substantial resources of offshore Oil and the US Corporations, energy Corporations are interested in exploiting them. There was a meeting in Mexico City about a year ago of the Cuban representatives and representatives of Texas Oil Companies and also the majors to discuss these opportunities of US Energy Corporations developing Cuban Oil.

Washington discovered that the meeting was being held in a Sheraton Hotel, which is owned by a US based corporation and they ordered the hotel to expel the Cubans not allowing them to talk to Texas Oil companies about developing joint resources. They'd like to do it the US. Agri-business would be interested in improving relations with Cuba. In fact a substantial part of the business world would be but the government and it's interesting in this case, because it a government that's closely tied to energy corporations, not a big secret, is blocking it, something similar is happening with regard to Iran. That relates to an element of international affairs, that in my view is not taken seriously enough. International affairs have a striking resemblance to the mafia. The Godfather does not brook disobedience even from some small storekeeper, its too dangerous, disobedience anywhere can spread. Spread the Castro idea and so on. So disobedience and successful defiance, or as it is also known in the internal documents, cannot be tolerated, people have to be punished, not the governments, the people have to be punished for successful defiance, and must be compelled to overthrow their own government, or else we'll continue to punish them. Even if the US population is opposed and even if the US business community is opposed. One of things that are most worrisome to the United States right now is the Venezuelan and Cuban alliance that's developed. If anyone believed what he or she read in their economics courses they'd be in favor of it. Venezuela and Cuba are each using their comparative advantage. Venezuela's advantage is its energy resources. Cuba's is what economist call, its human capital, highly trained, skilled personnel, a health system that has no comparison in the third world, teachers, doctors, nurses and so on, so they're exchanging them. Well that's what countries are supposed to do, according to what we're taught, but don't believe. Furthermore to make it even more dangerous Venezuela is funding a Cuban program, called Operation Miracle, right now in the Caribbean, but might extend, to locate people who are blind but can be surgically treated so that they'll recover their sight. So when Cuban doctors, say go to Jamaica and locate such people, and bring them back to Cuba, where they get high level skilled medical attention and they come back to Jamaica able to see, well you know that has effects. Somebody in your community is blind and goes to Cuba and comes back and can see now that means something and its apparently the US and Mexico planned a comparable program to compete with the Cuba Venezuela program but apparently never implemented it. Well that's a threat too. Programs of that kind that are dedicated to the welfare of the population are very threatening for the imperial master and that become the background

for the intensive efforts to strangle and punish Cuban's and now Venezuelans. So the constant denunciation of Chavez as a tyrant that doesn't permit free speech, and that is turning the country into a dictatorship and so on. I mean like all propaganda, even the most vulgar, there's an element of truth to it, but it's far from what we learn from mere inspection of the obvious evidence.

**Krzysztof Wodiczko** is an artist and professor of visual art at MIT. Over a period of nearly 40 years as a public artist, he has created a distinguished and influential body of work that addresses ethical issues of democracy and public space. In this interview Wodiczko discusses the implications of such a utopian project today and the responsibility of artists to seek conditions that create dynamic discourses that enrich democracy.

Interview Questions for Professor Krzysztof Wodiczko, March 14th, 2007, Interrogative Design Group, Center for Advanced Visual Studies, MIT

Please Say your name and who you are: Please start each answer by referring to the question.

1. Rivera's mural, Man at the Crossroads, is a uniquely American conception, designed to live in a free and multicultural society, where the potential for communism, had perhaps the best chance to grow. Can you discuss your understanding of the American constitution as it relates to this mural, and why a mural like Rivera's has the possibility to be censored and destroyed here in the United States?
2. The mural depicts man with access to information that can lead to knowledge and a brighter future. Well before the Internet, Rivera envisioned this mural (to) proposing greater and easier access to information resulting in knowledge. What does this mean for the poor uneducated children, the young generation of developing countries today? What is the responsibility of the teachers to educate a new generation of thinkers, and activists? What is the responsibility of the teacher to take responsibility and bear the consequences for the disciple's lack of responsibility and ethical potential?
3. Rivera's mural is not only an object, a memory, but as I understand of the memorial, it serves to function not only to commemorate the past, but to warn for the future. Through our neglect and passivity, the message of Rivera's mural, has gone ignored for over 70 years. Such ignorance has unintentionally contributed to the perpetuation of political asymmetry that has occurred in the world since. How do you see this mural warning America today about its local,

national and global obligations to take action to ensure that such tragedy will not happen again, and to encourage a more ethical future as Rivera illustrates.

4. You were born in Poland in 1943, the son of a Polish conductor and a Jew. The Warsaw ruins were your playgrounds. You are a witness to the devastation and tragedy of war that was already envisioned in this mural in 1932. In 2001 the City where you live, NY, became the site of another ruin. How do you see your role, and your experience as a survivor and the victim of war, as portrayed in the mural, to use the potential of art, to heal other victims?
5. Rivera depicts a May Day Parade in Red Square. Huge portraits of Marx and Lenin adorned the facades of buildings on May Day in Warsaw, just like in Soviet Union. How do you see Rivera's vision of using technocratic progress as opposed to the socialist New Economic Policy, of Lenin, where the worker was in a better understanding his rights in relation to labor?
6. Rivera's murals are permanent but this mural was perhaps one of the first, unplanned architectural after-images, a precursor to your own work to decorate the building with a political icon, that will last and become integrated with the building, long after it has disappeared. How do you see the power of critical discursive temporary decoration of buildings as opposed to Rivera's more permanent murals that can exist for centuries?
7. You once said that in the morning, you are Polish, midday you are Jewish, in the afternoon you are Canadian, and in the evening you are an American. Rivera's mural depicts Man at the Crossroads, Looking with Hope and High Vision, a hybrid American identity that consists of a vast array of groups. Could this Man at the Crossroads similarly be thought of as immigrant, who is looking for the opportunity within to propose and advance American Society?
8. How do you see Rivera's utopian San Simonian and Fordist vision to combine science and technology in relation to your own work that is also using technology to propose a more ethical world?

### Krzysztof Wodiczko Responds (Edited)

So its difficult to say exactly what would happen today with the equivalent of this mural, not the same mural, but a mural that would have, lets say similarly controversial figures and ideas and or attributes in it. In general it seemed to be unconstitutional to destroy the work of art, because it goes against the first amendment, which is the primary communicative right, guaranteed by the constitution. The question of course is to what degree can such a constitutional right can be exercised in a private space. So then the question is was Rockefeller center, private space, public space, or a space that was offered to the city according to some agreements with the state and the fact that there is a particular icon there or symbolic icon or figure of somebody who shouldn't be there according to someone who pays for the mural, doesn't mean that that person should demand removal of this part, or create condition for ultimatum, You either remove it or we remove entire mural. I don't know what was the agreement between Rivera and Rockefeller before they signed a contract of commission whether the possibility of Lenin being there was discussed or it was obvious and presented in advance or not. This still doesn't mean that Rockefeller should demand the change. If I was Rockefeller I would say alright I trust the artist I ask the artist to unleash all of his passion and mind, put together a project which may go beyond my imagination, even if I disagree some aspects of it, I should embrace it, because maybe in that disagreement will be the greatest, deepest value of it, because it will be a center of discourse, it will actually reflect, or maybe create conditions for many questions asked.

I would consider in today's reality that it would not be as easy as it was then. Even if it was an image of Chavez, for example, today, in a equivalent of this type of mural or public project and it was to be located in such exposed privately owned public space, I think it would be difficult for the owners of that space, to simply act in a straightforward and direct way as Rockefeller at that time. At least I hope so. In both cases it goes against the very spirit of the constitution, so possibly one could appeal or set up some special commission, maybe some congressional enquiry to question should such act happen today, whether it was constitutional. Probably if it went to Supreme Court, it would be still a debate, between various judges and that depends on the configuration of the court, whether it's more conservative or less. So that's how I see it in front of the constitution. One should not assume too much, but one should hope that it would be

more difficult to do the same kind of, to imagine the same situation in 2007. Now I believe that he himself had lots of faith in the American constitution so its possible that for him the very demand to make changes maybe went against his own hopes that he had invested in this country, United States. I would consider in today's reality that it would not be as easy as it was then.

It is clearly quite admirable project because it is so complex, because it has so many elements that seem to be irreconcilable. The viewer is in crossroads, not only man in crossroads. Perhaps one could imagine Rivera himself was in crossroads, maybe the crossroads is just a multiplicity of tasks of unresolved problems that are facing definitely leaders but also artists, just about every person, figure in this mural. One could project that on each party, each relationship between those figures. What would those people tell each other about the situation today? One could ask those questions looking at the mural. So there is room for quite an interesting work, that the spectators, visitors, users of that space, or casual visitors rushing through that space to work, and doing business, they might ask themselves, or they might identify, there is a crowd of potential issues and questions. If we were to think of the possibility of creating a public project, ambition of which would be to pose questions today, we would probably need to do it, in different way than Rivera. So one thing is clear, that, although there are all of those tasks and movements, processes, memories of things that went wrong, warnings signals, it's a kind of memorial monument and at the same time utopian field, or lets say maybe even a configuration of various utopias, of that time. Yes, yes but perhaps we don't really face any doubt that is coming from each of those elements. We don't know what kind of doubts and problems Lenin himself was going through. Of course Rivera himself probably is not as present there, in terms of his own dilemmas and questions. Its seemed to be interesting because its difficult to put together and at the same time its questionable because it is put together as one project, in such a, kind of totalizing way. In other words it creates a type of utopia, which we today, may, question. Question as something that in itself, has an authoritarian, authoritative, if not some people would say totalitarian tendencies, despite the fact that those tendencies are depicted there as unacceptable. So the contradiction here is that there are all of those elements and there are lots of things that are not there, that are not visible, because there are so many things there. So one could get lost, or maybe too easily find him or herself in this kind of work, rather than properly getting lost in a multiplicity of questions. So its not an

encouraging work in terms of the position of a subject today, that many artists are trying to share with the public and with each other today. So the artistic vision today is to create, to encourage sharing our doubts, rather than joining each other in one, large, utopian project. Rather to question the various system that we see very well. Its so well established as whether its this or that or some other form of capitalistic system that seem to be so well established that despite all of the calls by Chavez, and people in his circle and colleagues, other leaders around, they seem to be a minority of ideological concepts that are in danger of questioning the democratic process itself. So they are not really that solid as they claim to be because they are themselves contradictory. Instead we have various ways to questions and defend our right to question and refuse to be told what to think, within the existing systems. So man in the crossroad today is maybe the one who is trying to figure out how to deconstruct in a daily work, in a daily life, in various forms of micro resistances and refusals, or seeking conditions for more dynamic discourses how to make better the world in which we live.



**Laura Gonzalez** is a researcher and image theorist at the Autonomous University in Mexico City (UNAM). I visited her during my third visit to Mexico City to discuss the implications of relooking at Rivera's 1933 Mural, especially, the relevance of technology in *Man at the Crossroads*.

Questions for Laura Gonzalez, UNAM (Autonomous University of Mexico City), Tuesday March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007

1. What are the implications of reinterpreting Rivera's Rockefeller mural today? Is it important and relevant and why do you think so?
2. Who might represent some of the figures if they were to be replaced today with contemporary people?
3. How do you see the work of contemporary artists using technology and media in comparison with Rivera, who was using limited technology and an ancient technique to express his political, artistic and philosophical vision?
4. Rivera's assistant Lucienne Bloch, the photographer was instrumental in preserving the memory of the Rockefeller mural. What is the relevance and importance today of the photograph and the photographer in an increasingly saturated world of images, to preserve and save the hidden, the censored and the unseen subject?
5. Rivera's mural, *Man at the Crossroads*, portrays man in the possession of a technology and science, looking with hope and high vision to a new and better future. How do you see the relevance and importance of his message today in a moment when we are also at a crossroads in relation to advances in technology such as the Internet, genetic engineering?
6. Rivera's Rockefeller mural maybe influenced by the work of Eisenstein who he knew at the time. It could have some constructivist and Masonic influence. Can you discuss these influences and others as you see them in relation to the work of Rivera?
7. Can you discuss the differences between Rivera's original conception painted in New York and the reconstruction in Bellas Artes?
8. How do you see the censorship of Rivera's mural as a provocation compared to contemporary artists?

9. A younger generation of artists today maybe less politically active and generally more passive. How do you see the work of Rivera to encourage a more thoughtful and activated approach to art?
10. Rivera's Rockefeller mural and many of his Works appear jam packed with constructed and narrative histories, that, in order to understand you must look for hours at the mural. Do you think an added element of time, and the moving image will help his work?
11. Time and space are a vital consideration for the viewer to better understand the contents of the mural. Can you talk about Rivera's construction of time and space as a mechanism to control the viewer?
12. Why was the image of Lenin able to completely efface the rest of the images and symbols of the mural? Can you tell me about this?

Laura Gonzalez Responds (Edited)

The context in which Rivera painted this mural, both at the Rockefeller Center and at Bellas Artes afterwards, to mark the differences between his time and our time, I think it's a very different context, I think maybe it's the difference between the thinking of the modern era, and the post-modern era, thinking that was very positive towards technology, before the atomic bomb, and before the crash of the USSR. Maybe he was very positive in his thinking of the outreach of the left and Marxist government of the Soviet Union before it actually became authoritarian and totalitarian. So I think, the mural is important in our understanding of the positive ways in which Rivera was viewing both technology and Marxist thought.

Yes I think it's the center of the mural, his view on technology, because he had a positive view of technology, technology as an instrument of a man, not a woman, a man and I would say that in this mural, there is an interesting dialectic between the symbols, like masses and women and technology, have like almost these feminine passive quality and man and his instruments and theory and war are like more of an active masculine quality. So to me its interesting to think that today we have a more critical view of technology as something that can have like an active positive consequence on the lives of everyone. But it can also have a very destructive, how can I say. It can dominate humanity in a bad sense not only in a positive sense. So I think we, at this time, our view would not be so positive as Rivera in the 30s.

The figure of Lenin and Trotsky in the mural was no fun for Rockefeller. Rivera might have sold him the idea that he was going to paint a mural of the positive consequences of technology and the control of nature. That's within the ideology that Rockefeller would support but not necessarily the social politics of the left as were applied at that time in the Soviet Union.

At the start of the 30s the politics of the US government were social, I mean more social than they are today. So there was something on which to ground a mural like this one. But evidently it was no fun to put the characters of Lenin and Trotsky because it's as if you were supporting their social politics in the Soviet Union. Trotsky at that time came to Mexico and was a personal friend of Rivera.

It's interesting because it's not a technological war, they are wearing masks but it's this kind of war where there is man fighting against man. There are some airplanes but it's not like the technological war that we could have today with high technology and long distance ammunition. So it's also the mass against the mass and the funny thing of this mural is that the masses of workers and the masses of soldiers are basically the same. They're the instruments of someone else in the mural. They are active in the sense that they will be fighting for things but they are not fighting for their own things. It's like they are carried away by someone else. They are the instruments of someone who is planning or devising the politics. So it's a view of the mass, a very passive view of the mass. The man who's in charge of technology is an abstract man and in the mural is associated with a high-class person, not with a worker, because he's blond and has. In a color coded society like Mexico, or maybe like the United States too, it's not like the common worker it's like a, another kind of, maybe middle class, high middle class, person, who has the technology in his hands. There's this ambiguity because the figure has these gloves that the worker use, but it's not like the masses that owe technology their power. It's a very class oriented view of technology.

Maybe we could compare this mural to the one in the National Palace. In the plastic sense this montage of different elements but there is not a dynamic view of the figures that are mounted together like in the murals of Siqueiros. Siqueiros had a cinematic quality of the reading of the mural. You can almost think of Siqueiros murals as films and he did use film and he did use photography as a tool in the construction. And not only

the syntactic construction of the mural but also the ideological construction of the mural. In this particular mural of Rivera, technology is the theme, is the subject of the mural, but its not encoded in the syntax of the mural, which is very, I would say classical. It's not dynamic in that time sense dimension as the murals of Siquieros.

Maybe we can explain it metaphorically or by analogy. The way in which Rivera constructs his murals is like a photograph, like an instant that's suspended in time, and in the mural of Rivera you can see different instances that's suspended in time, but those instances are not connected in the reading of the mural, while in the murals of Siqueiros you would not think of a still photograph, but a movie camera, that is moving in time and space and is also directing your reading of the mural. So Siquieros would be filmmaking and Rivera would be photography, still photography. That would be like the analogy if you would try to compare the syntax of the mural with a technology image like photography or film.

I would compare the kind of view of technology and how it's represented socially with metropolis of Fritz Lang. Its like you have the different elements, the social elements, you have like the owner of the factory, you have the workers, the workers have no identity. They are just instruments of the owner of the factory. And then there's this abstract man in the center of the mural. In Metropolis it's the heart that's the center of the whole argument, which will unite the workers and the owner and the good use of technology and the bad use of technology and be like the element that would make the equilibrium. And here its like the figure of the worker, at the center of the mural, that's like the heart of the mural, and the element that's the point of equilibrium, of everything, of both the structural, formal elements of the mural, and the ideological elements of the mural. It's in the middle and here you have the rich classes and then you have the poor classes and here you have the war then you have the masses. Its like a dialectic thinking but it's a very flat, a very evident way of balancing things out in the mural.

How we read the mural today? We wouldn't be so dialectic. That dialectic doesn't support today. Things are more complex and more difficult. You were speaking of the ethical uses of technology in the genetic engineering. It's more complex than good and bad and positive and negative. Lets take technology as a subject of art. I think that this point it would be very difficult for an artist to represent his views on a piece of art, his views of technology, because its so complex. Here in Rivera's mural you see technology

but now we are using high technology, electronic technology, micro technology. It's so complex. It's such a complex affair. In Rivera's time you could use technology as a tool, but if you are an artist today you are wondering if you are the subject in technology as an object or if, you as a person, living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, are not part of a technologies object also, because we use so many technological interfaces at this time, even with our bodies. There is this German Philosopher Pedro Zloterdyk who is thinking, he is proposing that at this time, we cannot think of subject, object relationship with technology. We are also objects of technology ourselves and technology is becoming a subject. I mean with these artificial intelligence interfaces technology is also a subject and it's more of an inter-subjective relationship that we have with technology, than subject object oriented relationship. So its really very complex when you are thinking of cells, I mean in the Siqueiros mural you have this man and his hands he has like this representation of a cell that's dividing. But now we have these cells that are thinking by themselves through technological manipulation so, I think that the degree of relationship of man and technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is very intense, much more than it was at Rivera's time. So it would be difficult to represent it as an object.

**Miguel** is an Indigenous Mexican living on a small farm in rural Morelos. Through his brother in law, an American, I was able to arrange an interview to discuss his numerous excursions across the Mexico/US border, working as a smuggler and his work as an illegal immigrant in the United States. The interview took place in his parent's one room house on March 28<sup>th</sup>. The interview has been translated from Spanish.

Interview with Miguel, Border Crosser, Morelos, Mexico, Wednesday March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007

1. Can you tell me about your attempts to cross the border?
2. Why did you do it?
3. When did you do it?
4. How did you do it?
5. What happened to you?
6. How was your life on the other side?
7. What kind of feelings did you have when you crossed the border?
8. Did you get help from anyone?
9. Where you hurt by the border patrol?
10. How do you think life can be better for you and your family in the United States?
12. What are you plans for the future?

Miguel Responds (Edited)

The first time I went I didn't know why I was going really. I just went because someone told me that the wages are much better there, so I went to the border and I had to work on the border while I gradually learned how to cross. For three months he tried to cross and got caught many times and gradually he had learned ways where he could cross and where he couldn't cross and he's crossed so many times that he's lost count. There have been times when its been quite rough, where I have crossed and I ran out of food and I ran out of water and you get scared. I've found strange things like bags, that are left in the middle of the desert and you find the very personal belongings such as letters from people's girlfriends or wives saying goodbye to their loved ones that they have been carrying with them in their bags. And suddenly you see these bags in the middle of the desert and you don't know what's become of the people. Are they alive, did they die in the road, what's happened and you don't know.

He's crossed the border everywhere from Tijuana to Matamoros and everywhere you go, no matter where you go, the thing to do is to get to the place and then do research. You ask around, you find out what's the easiest way to cross sometimes it's a tunnel, sometimes it's a road, sometimes its walking through the desert. You ask around and you do an investigation. Then you always know who is going to cross the border because those who are walking around without a lot of resources, without a lot of money, you can tell, who is trying to go across the border and you find those people and you pool your resources. Then you find out other details. When you get to the other side what's there. Is there a McDonalds or a K Mart and if so then you have to bring a change of cloths so you go to the store and immediately you change your cloths and you blend into the store and you just kind of blend into the crowd. Is there a bus that comes by and if so what currency does they take, in order to get on the bus and keep going and blend in and keep going. You have to make sure you have enough food and water appropriate to the kind of crossing it is, whether it's a short tunnel or a long walk through the desert and you prepare and a lot of the time you do all this research and then you start from scratch again because sometimes you'll cross in California and immigration, they won't just deport you there, they'll take you to Texas and deport you across the other side of the border in Texas. So you've got to know how to do the research as soon as you get there and figure out how you go. And the easiest way to do it is to pay a Coyote, to pay a smuggler, but he's never paid a Coyote to do it he's always done it himself.

Well there is a feeling that after 8 or 10 miles into the country, there's usually less immigration activity, less people looking for you, but you never feel relaxed, you never feel completely ok, I'm safe, because anytime anything could happen. There's always raids, anything could happen and you could get deported and everyday that you go to work, you pray to god that your not, when you are getting in the car to go to work, you won't get stopped by the Cops, cause that'll lead to you getting deported, but you never feel completely safe. You feel safer and you relax and you rest and you can sleep but its only a question of safer, you're not completely safe, because you're not in your country, you're always in a certain sense and outlaw and you have to live your life that way.

This last time that he was there it was the stretch of time where he felt like he had the most normal routine. He works in construction. He does house remodeling and this last

time he met a lot more people. He worked with other people. He learned plumbing, carpentry, things that he didn't know that much of before. When you are there you know its work work work. You work all the hours you can. You know that you are only there for a limited amount of time. Either you are going to have to back for something or you will get deported but he'd work crazy 20 hour shifts, sometimes he'd go out and work night shifts anything he could in order to make a lot of money, in a short amount of time.

So for example he started because without charging his friends, he knew your friends who needed money so he would take them without charging them but then the same people he would take across, eventually after being there, they'd start to look at it as a business and start to charge other people and he always knew things so they've always asked him to do certain things. He knows all the best ways to cross. So he would show them. He knows how to get to wherever you need to go in the states. He knows how to buy cars. He knows what papers you need to have. He knows how to buy bus tickets, he knows how to buy plane tickets if you need to go to NY he can get people to NY. So he's done all that but he never set out to do it as a business, its just he knows all this stuff so they asked him to do it.

When September 11<sup>th</sup> happened he was in Arizona and Arizona is one of the more riskier states to be in, there's more immigration, more police, more security, and people have their own systems, they look out for each other and since then, in that time, just by chance, he's had to travel a lot taking people across the country so he's had to travel a lot to the United States since September 11<sup>th</sup> and certainly he does notice that there's a lot more police, there's more checkpoints, there's more security and on the border itself as well except on the border what they've done, he says there are certain points where it easy to cross they've concentrated all this immigration forces so you can't cross there anymore, so you have to go to places that are farther away from towns, that's longer and more dangerous for the people that are crossing. Its dangerous in many different ways, you have to further, further in the desert and there is more risk of you dying, more for those that drive across the desert, then they hide you under the dashboard, in false openings. You are in these hot places for long drives next to the motor and horrible things happen to people that way too but even so since September 11<sup>th</sup>, certainly the



amount of people crossing hasn't gone down, its gone up and its economics. There are still people who need to work and still business to take people across.

Now that he's here in Mexico he's selling fruits and vegetables, which is something he's never done before. Its hard cause it's not the same as being there. Here you earn very little. There what you earn is enough to pay for everything all your basic needs, but here its much more expensive. But being there it was hard being far from your family whereas here the family is nearby and being in the States had made him value things more but he is enjoying being with his family. I want to stay here.

**Florentine Aguilar Garcia** is a activist, rebel and adherent member of the EZLN Other Campaign living in Cuernavaca Mexico. The Other Campaign is a nine-month program that calls for autonomy and equal rights for native Mexicans and a redrafting of the constitution. This interview discusses and compares the social philosophy of Man at the Crossroads with that of the Other Campaign. The interview took place in Cuernavaca on March 31<sup>st</sup>. The interview has been translated from Spanish.

Interview with EZLN Other Campaign Member, Florentino Aguilar Garcia, Cuernavaca, Mexico, Saturday March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007

Please Say your name and who you are

1. Rivera's mural in Rockefeller center shows "Man at the Crossroads Looking with Hope and High Vision to a New and Better Future". Looking at your social philosophy how do you see Mexico and the United States relationship in improving some of the issues illustrated in this mural, such as:

- i. The workers arriving at an understanding of their rights in relationship to labor.
- ii. A better understanding of how to use technology for improving society
- iii. A better understanding of how to educate our children and future generations
- iv. Fostering economic development between these countries??
- v. Human understanding of the natural environment
- vi. Improving the rights of the indigenous and disenfranchised peoples

such as:

- The poor person who develops from the earth all of the riches that are native to us
- The worker of the city who transforms and distributes the raw material of the earth
- The soldier who produces martyrs in religion and wars
- The immigrant who crosses the border in search of better future that he/she is unable to sustain in Mexico

- How do you see your vision for to improve these circumstances for Mexico and the world?

- As your neighbor how do you see the role of the United States, and other countries in this?

2. Rivera believed the more native art is the more it belongs to the entire world. He believed that by looking within at the beauty of Mexico, by first planting in his own soil, he could share a universal vision of beauty for the world.

Can you talk about the importance of looking within at the native people rather than Europe or the United States?

4. What is your relationship with other Latin American countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador, Cuba, Puerto Rico and your other Latin American neighbors?

In his description of his mural man at the crossroads, Rivera explained that the television and the moving image have the ability to unite and activate humans with power and intelligence.

5. Can you talk about your philosophy employing art and artists to communicate your vision in the Other Campaign? What methods do you use so that the voice of the Zapatismo may be heard?

6. Can you tell me about the progress of the campaign in gaining support around Mexico?

7. Along with privatization of public resources, and autonomy for indigenous peoples can you explain how your proposals for a redrafting of the constitution will reorganize Mexican society into a more equal system?

Florentino Aguilar Garcia Responds (Edited)

My name is Florentino Aguilar Garcia and I am a member of the collective, the Tribulation Other Campaign.

I think that the relationship between the government of Mexico have obeyed the interests of companies that maintain hegemony with the United States. The United States relationship is an overpowering one. The relationship is not based on government-to-government but the governments enforcing the people.

The dream that they sell to the Mexican people is only an illusion there is nothing tangible to it. Its not always that people are able to send money back to their family in Mexico. They live marginalized from their own people, the workers that go to work in the US.

We think that the United States government needs to be more humanitarian, they need to demonstrate humanity. Maybe because they don't have any roots, there exists so much war and violence in the United States. They are basically ruthless because they have no traditional morals. War is a sport or hobby to the United States. Nonetheless the situation with Mexico doesn't benefit anyone.

Yes we believe that there needs to be dialogue through the senators, but the senators have to make themselves available to the people. They haven't done this. Its always been agreements between themselves and not considering the people. This could be a solution to how the rights of works are improved.

This is something that is not seen that is not considered in our value. How is it possible that we are living in a system where there is no longer just exploitation but over exploitation?

Despite the labor being from the city or the country there is no improvement in lifestyle when these people find jobs. The situation doesn't improve. None of this is seen in their salary. They workers work a lot of hours, very strong work, and very hard work. The people in power are originally also from this class, but when they get to this level of power, they have no empathy with the people. They forget even about their own family and they start to do things that go against the interests of the community and they don't consider the people, workers are the ones who transform the value of their work.

The situation of inequality is really horrible. If the people get together as one, they can transform the material. The community needs to unite and with pressure they will be able to change the value of their labor and demand more for what they do.

I don't believe there exists any martyr soldiers today, because follow a logic and they are a part of a system. Martyr soldiers are like guerillas. We don't think that there are any martyr soldiers, because martyr soldiers, humiliate and invade and they keep exploiting people.

The immigrants who cross the borders. That is something that is a disadvantage because they go with hope that there is something that will change their life and lives of their family. There has been some exchange with the governments about this but it hasn't worked. It's been a failure after failure. Those who are refused become marginalized. This is also apparent in other parts of the world. People stop respecting politicians and they start to do their work on their own.

## **Natives**

I think after 94, the indigenous people in Chiapas have showed an example of how we don't need the government to improve society. They show us solidarity. Politics has turned into a big business. It doesn't function how it was intended to. Indigenous people show us they can resolve their problems with organization in their assemblies. They have resolved problems of education and health with their own force their own strength. Indigenous communities have managed to corporate and work independently. The government just creates schemes. The Native people can cure illness they don't have hospitals and clinics but they don't die.

Autonomy and independence, we must learn this from the native people. We have seen this and must follow their lead.

There is a wide relationship in many of these countries there has been rebellious movements where the people of these places are no longer spectators but actors, they represent themselves, they say what they want and how they want it. And this is the relation we have with these people. We set examples for each other. The government is obsolete. These countries work with each other to fix these problems.

Maybe there is some rebellion in the way those people act and the way we act but that's how we identify with them.

## **Television**

I think that the movie is like going for a walk. The moving image will transform us or tell us something. Intelligence could develop through the moving image. TV is 100% commercial in Mexico and there have been several local channels that have attempted to teach culture but it hasn't worked. The TV didn't work to foment culture, because it previously had taught commercialism and we are now desensitized to the cultural programs that were being developed. TV's act as public ministries. They condemn and subject people to the government. The TV doesn't work like what Diego Rivera thought,

it doesn't teach, it does the opposite. In his mural maybe it works that way but in reality it doesn't.

The Other Campaign has had an agreement that has been going for a year. Up until now there has been a qualitative and quantities base. It's not easy to fight established institutions. The other campaigns are seen as being against the institution. They are basically seen as threatening. It's a contradiction. How is it possible that the Other Campaign can be? A lot of people have this image about us. The Other Campaign did influence people to take action but we will work passively and in a civilized manner, of course we will be seen as a threat because we don't agree with them, but we are civilized and we are passive.

There are a lot people interested in our campaign. They see us a correct alternative because the government doesn't represent them well enough. We are trying to predetermine and establish our representation and our voice. We will create dialogue amongst ourselves and we will create the solutions for our own problems. Each one of us will be able to say what we want how we want it and when.

We believe about the privatization of the companies. The companies don't give any money to us. I am talking about those big companies. Dismantling these big companies who are draining us.

The autonomy has worked very well among the indigenous community. Many people have put up this flag of autonomy and independence. One of the proposals of the Other Campaign is that the constitution of 1917 needs to be completely manipulated and transformed. It is only through the dialogue that we can rise to power.

Never will the politician pass a law that we will be subject to their abuse. The Other Campaign will never let his happen because we will listen to each other. A civilian never passes a law. Why don't people have a position in determining what law is passed and what is not?

Democracy is only democracy when its election time. Other than that we have no say in what goes on. There is no democracy. It has ceased to exist but it's never really existed. What it is that we want is a new constitution.

Politicians are not concerned with the people. They are not concerned with social peace. Our community is very mad with our government. Whether they show it on the street. People who do so are hit persecuted and condemned. What are justice freedom, liberty and democracy? It is the objective of the Other Campaign to find democracy, liberty, justice, health education, jobs etc, but this constitution has to consider what everyone thinks.



## Video Stills

Fig. 19. Image from Opening Sequence of Man at the Crossroads Video, Showing Lucienne Allen



Fig. 20. Image still of Krzysztof Wodiczko from Man at the Crossroads





Fig. 21. Image Still of Laura Gonzalez in the social scene



Fig. 22. Image Still of Noam Chomsky holding the flag of the Fourth International

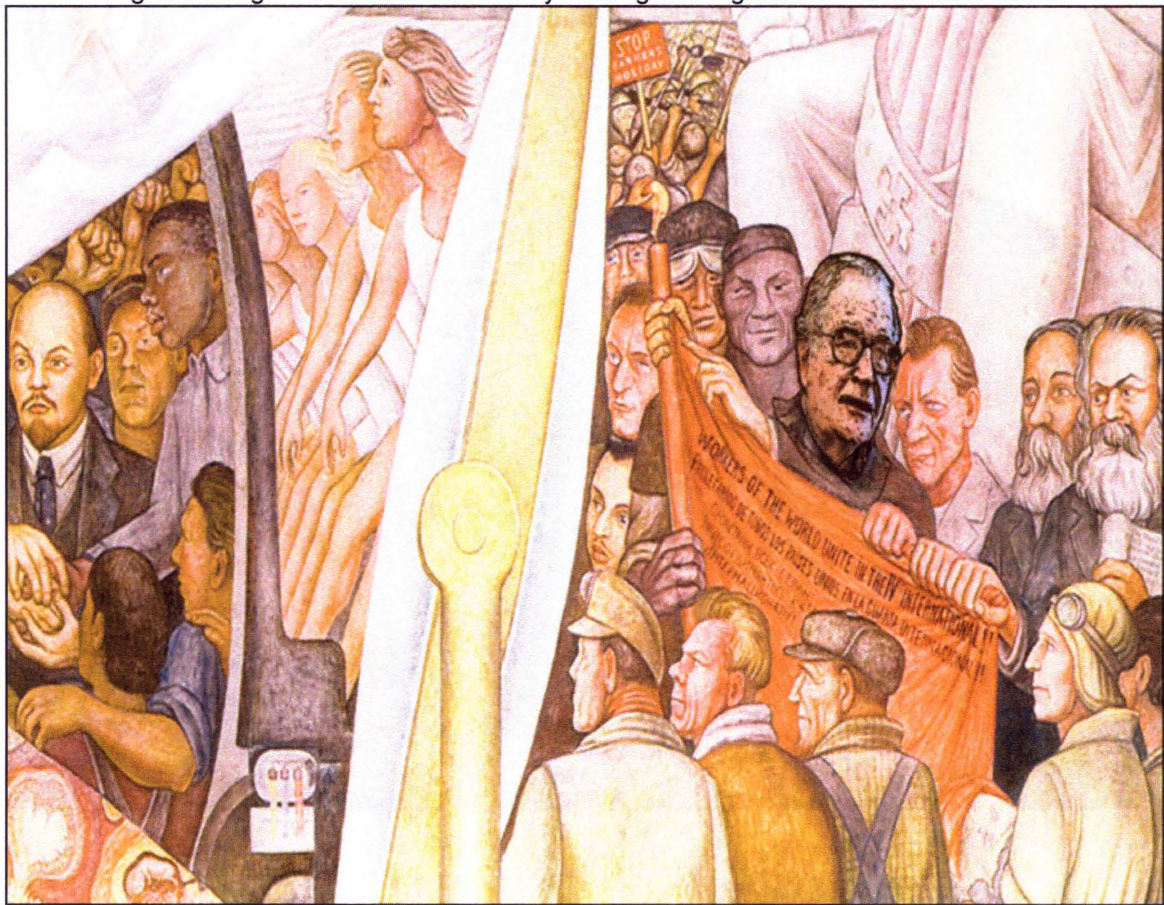




Fig. 23 Image Still of James Sherley in place of Darwin, Man at the Crossroads

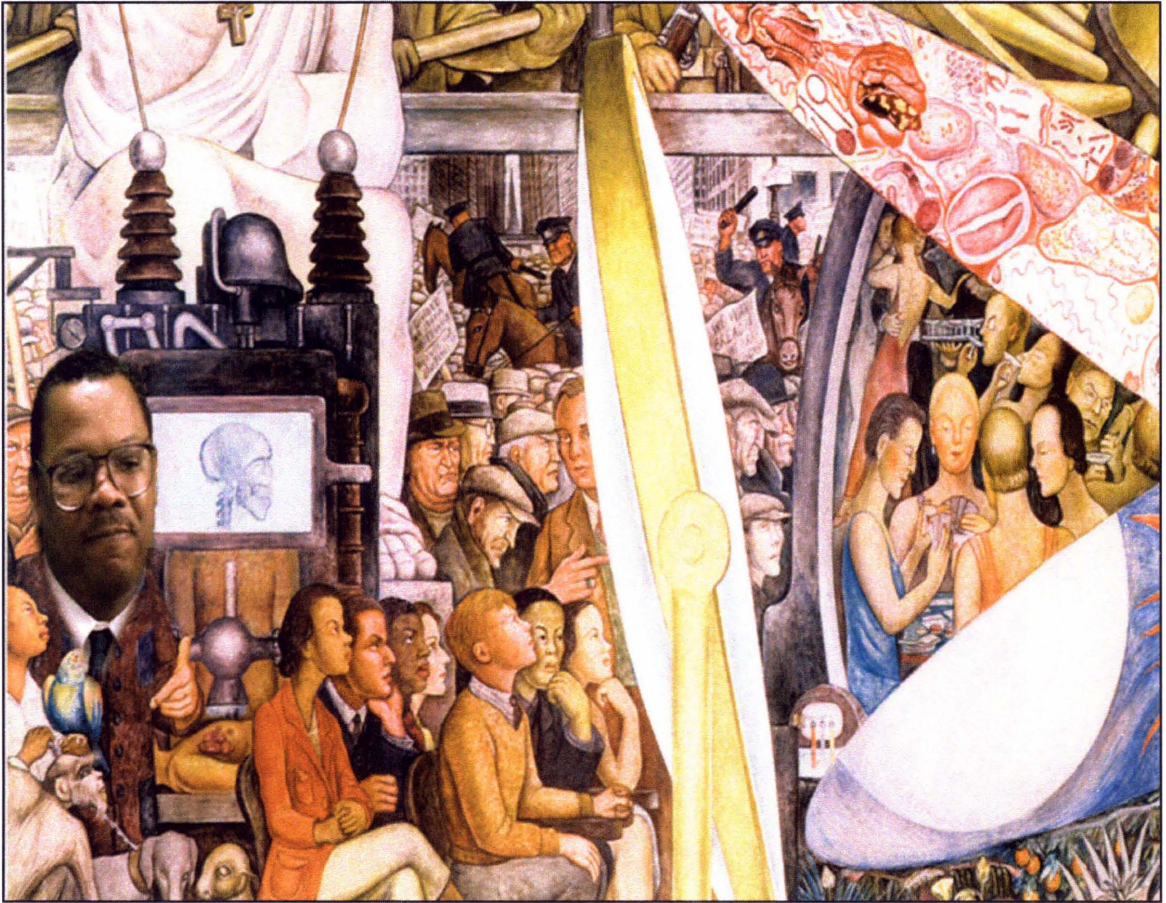
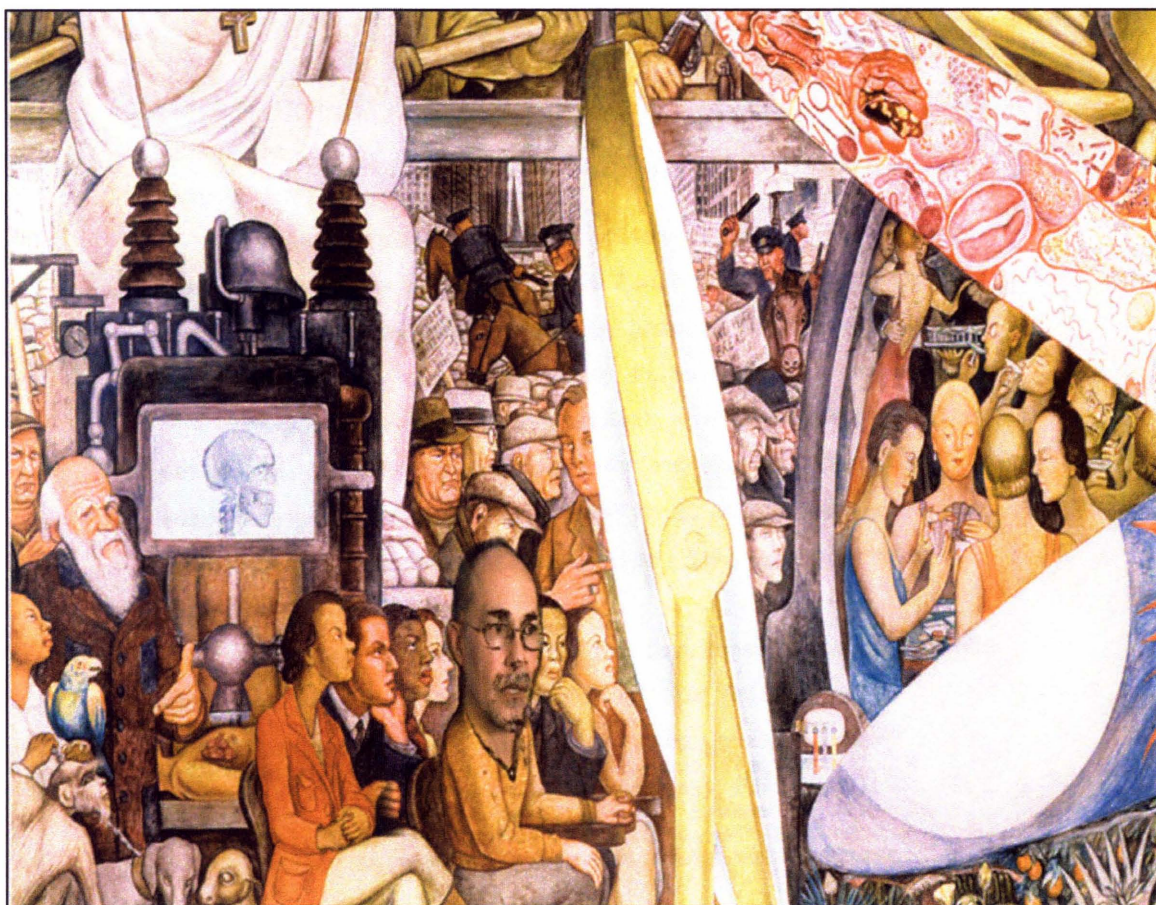


Fig 24. Image Still of Gabriel Figueroa in *Man at the Crossroads*



Document File

Fig. 25. Diego Rivera Contract for Rockefeller Center, Rockefeller Center Private Archive Collection

<b>EXPIRED</b>		<b>ROCKEFELLER CENTER, INC.</b> OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY REC'D NOV 16 1932 DOCUMENT REGISTER 1/24/33 DOCUMENT <i>filed under R</i> HERE FILED REFER TO <i>App'd. G.D. 11/15/32</i>
<b>ROCKEFELLER CENTER, INC.</b> 420 LEXINGTON AVENUE - NEW YORK CITY		
November 2, 1932		
Diego Rivera, Esq., Detroit, Michigan.		
Dear Sir:		
<p>It is the object of this letter to embody in writing the terms of your agreement with Rockefeller Center, Inc., to paint, touch up and direct the hanging of certain mural paintings for the R.C.A. Building in Rockefeller Center.</p> <p>In consideration of the mutual agreements hereinafter set forth, this letter when subscribed by you after the word "Accepted" at the end hereof shall constitute a binding agreement between Rockefeller Center, Inc. and yourself, upon the following terms:</p> <p>1. The paintings which you are to make in accordance with this contract shall consist of the following:</p> <p>(a) One which shall cover the "east panel" in the main hall in the said R.C.A. Building and which shall measure approximately forty (40) feet ten and one-half (10-1/2) inches by sixteen (16) feet seven (7) inches, containing approximately six hundred seventy-seven square feet.</p> <p>(b) One to cover a side panel in said main hall which shall measure approximately nine (9) feet eleven and three-fourths (11-3/4) inches by sixteen (16) feet seven (7) inches, containing approximately one hundred eighty-two square feet.</p> <p>(c) One to cover another side panel in said main hall which shall measure approximately nine (9)</p>		



Diego Rivera, Esq.

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November 2, 1932

feet eleven and three-fourths (11-3/4) inches by sixteen (16) feet seven (7) inches, containing approximately one hundred eighty-two square feet.

- (d) Incidental paintings to be placed between the elevators, the total area of which paintings shall measure approximately thirty-three (33) square feet, the exact size of which will be determined by you, subject to our approval.

2. It is understood that the above measurements are subject to change at our discretion, it being understood that we will give you timely notice of any such change and that any such change shall not materially increase the gross total area of painted surface.

3. The human figures in the front plane in said paintings shall measure approximately seven (7) feet six (6) inches in height and the other elements of the work shall be in proportionate size.

4. On or before December 1, 1932, you shall submit to us preliminary sketches of the final paintings, which sketches shall be one quarter the size of the final work. These sketches shall be subject to the approval of our architects in their uncontrolled discretion. If our architects shall not approve of the sketches in their original form, or as the same may be changed by you pursuant to the suggestions, if any, of said architects, we shall have the right to cancel this agreement at once by giving you written notice by registered mail of our desire so to do. In such event, we shall return said sketches to you, and neither you nor we shall be under any further liability one to the other, and you shall have the right to retain the payment made by us to you upon the deli-



Diego Rivera, Esq.

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November 2, 1932

very of this agreement.

5. If and when our architects shall approve said sketches, we shall notify you promptly of that fact and thereupon you shall proceed with the final paintings. In doing the final paintings, the sketches theretofore submitted by you and approved by our architects as aforesaid shall be faithfully and closely followed. The paintings shall be done principally in black, white and gray, and in such other colors as shall be designated on the sketches mentioned above. All of such paintings shall be signed by you in the customary manner.

6. The finished paintings shall be in our hands in New York City ready for hanging not later than April 1, 1933, it being understood that in the delivery of said paintings, time is of the essence. You will keep us advised from time to time of the progress of your work.

7. We shall furnish you at your studio in Detroit, Michigan, with the prepared canvasses upon which the final paintings shall be made. We will deliver these canvasses to you as soon as possible after our architects shall have approved your sketches as above provided.

8. The canvasses shall at all times remain our property, and shall be turned over to us unimproved or improved by you, as the case may be, whenever this contract be terminated through any default or otherwise. We shall insure the canvasses against loss or damage of all kinds in such amounts as we shall decide upon.

Diego Rivera, sq.

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November 2, 1932

9. We shall pay the cost of shipping the completed paintings to New York from Detroit, Michigan. We shall designate the manner and route by which the canvasses shall be shipped to New York, and you shall ship them according to our designation.

10. When the paintings are finished and delivered you shall prepare them for varnishing, and we shall cause said varnishing to be done.

11. We shall cause the canvasses to be hung in place in the places for which they are intended, but this work shall be done under your personal supervision in New York City. Either prior to or after the hanging of the paintings, you shall touch them up as may be necessary.

12. We shall pay the expenses of such trips from Detroit, Michigan, to New York City, and return, which you shall necessarily make for the purpose of touching up and directing the hanging of the finished paintings. The amount to be paid you shall be substantiated by proper vouchers or other statements.

13. We shall pay you for your work provided for hereby by the sum of Twenty-one Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$21,500), provided that all the terms and conditions of this agreement shall be carried out by you. Said sum shall be paid as follows:

Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500)

upon the signing and delivery of this letter and your written acceptance of its terms, the receipt of which sum you hereby acknowledge.

Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500)

Fig. 29. Page 5 Diego Rivera Contract for Rockefeller Center, Rockefeller Center Private Archive Collection

<b>Diego Rivera, Esq.</b>	<b>-5-</b>	<b>November 2, 1932</b>
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upon the approval by our architects of the sketches mentioned above.

Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500) per month commencing on the 15th day of the month immediately following the date upon which the sketches shall be approved as aforesaid and ending with the 15th day of March, 1933.

The balance of said sum of Twenty-one Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$21,500) then unpaid shall be paid to you within thirty (30) days after the final paintings shall have been hung and touched up by you as above provided.

If our architects shall not approve your sketches as above provided, and if we shall elect to cancel this contract, you shall have no right to any further payment beyond the first payment of Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500) made to you upon the execution and delivery of this agreement.

It is understood, of course, that we may, if we desire, have other paintings for the above mentioned entrance hall, and for other places in Rockefeller Center, made by other artists.

Very truly yours,

ROCKEFELLER CENTER, INC.,

Attest:	By: Todd, Robertson, Todd Engineering Corporation,
_____	By <u><i>John D. Brown</i></u>
Secretary.	President.
Attest:	Todd & Brown, Inc.,
_____	By <u><i>John D. Brown</i></u>
Secretary.	President.

ACCEPTED: *Diego Rivera*

Fig. 30 Page 1 Diego Rivera Description for Rockefeller Center, Rockefeller Center Private Archive Collection

*Mr. Council  
Please study  
report JN 300*

SUBJECT MATTER OF THE PROPOSED MURAL DECORATIONS BY  
DIEGO RIVERA FOR THE RADIO CORPORATION OF AMERICA  
BUILDING IN THE ROCKEFELLER CENTRE, NEW YORK CITY.

On the side where Brangwyn is to depict the development of the Ethical Relations of Mankind, my painting will show as the culmination of this evolution, human intelligence in possession of the Forces of Nature, expressed by the lightening striking off the hand of Jupiter and being transformed into useful electricity that helps to cure man's ills, unites men through Radio and Television, and furnishes them with Light and Motive Power. Below, the Man of Science presents the scale of Natural Evolution, the understanding of which replaces the Superstitions of the past. This is the Frontier of Ethical Evolution.

On the side where Sert is to represent the development of the Technical Power of Man, my panel will show the Workers arriving at a true understanding of their rights regarding the means of production, which has resulted in the planning of the liquidation of Tyranny, personified by a crumbling statue of Caesar whose head has fallen to the ground. It will also show the Workers of the Cities and the Country inheriting the Earth. This is expressed by the placing of the hands of the producers in the gesture of possession over a map of the world resting on sheaves of wheat supported by a dynamo, expressive of Agricultural Production supported by Machinery and Scientific Technique - the result of the evolution of the methods of production. This is the Frontier of Material Development.

The main plastic function of the central panel is to express the axis of the Building, its loftiness, and the ascending echelon of its lateral masses. For this, color will be employed in the centre of the composition merging laterally with the general clair-obscur.

In the centre, the telescope brings to the vision and understanding of man the most distant celestial bodies. The microscope makes visible and comprehensible to man infinitesimal living organisms, connecting atoms and cells with the astral system. Exactly in the median line, the cosmic energy received by two antennae is conducted to the machinery controlled by the Worker, where it is transformed into productive energy.

Fig. 30 Page 2 Diego Rivera Description for Rockefeller Center, Rockefeller Center Private Archive Collection

~~The Worker gives his right hand to the Peasant who questions him, and with his left hand, takes the hand of the sick and wounded Soldier, the victim of War, leading him to the New World.~~ On the right of the central group, the Mothers, and on the left, the Teachers, watch over the development of the New Generation, which is protected by the work of the Scientists. Above, on the right, the Cinematograph shows a group of young women in the enjoyment of health-Sports, and on the left it shows a group of unemployed workmen in the bread-line. Above this group, the Television gives an image of War, as in the case of unemployment, the result of the evolution of Technical Power unaccompanied by a corresponding Ethical Development. On the opposite side, above the representation of the joys derived from Sports, the same Television brings the image of a Popular Movement, the result of high aspirations created by Ethical Development but unsuccessful without an accompanying parallel material development of Technical Power and Industrial Organisation, either already existing or created by the movement itself.

*Left lower side* In the ~~center~~, ~~this~~ is expressed by the ~~triple aspect~~ *the union of*, the Peasant who develops from the Earth the products which are the origin and base of all the riches of Mankind, the Worker of the Cities who transforms and distributes the raw materials given by the Earth, and the Soldier who, under the Ethical Force that produces martyrs in religions and wars, represents Sacrifice. Man, represented by ~~these three figures~~, looks with uncertainty but with hope towards a future, more complete balance between the Technical and Ethical development of Mankind necessary to a New, more Humane and Logical Order.

*an idea  
The  
skilled  
worker*

*Diego Rivera*

Fig. 31. Nelson Rockefeller Letter regarding portrait of Lenin, Rockefeller Center Private Archive Collection

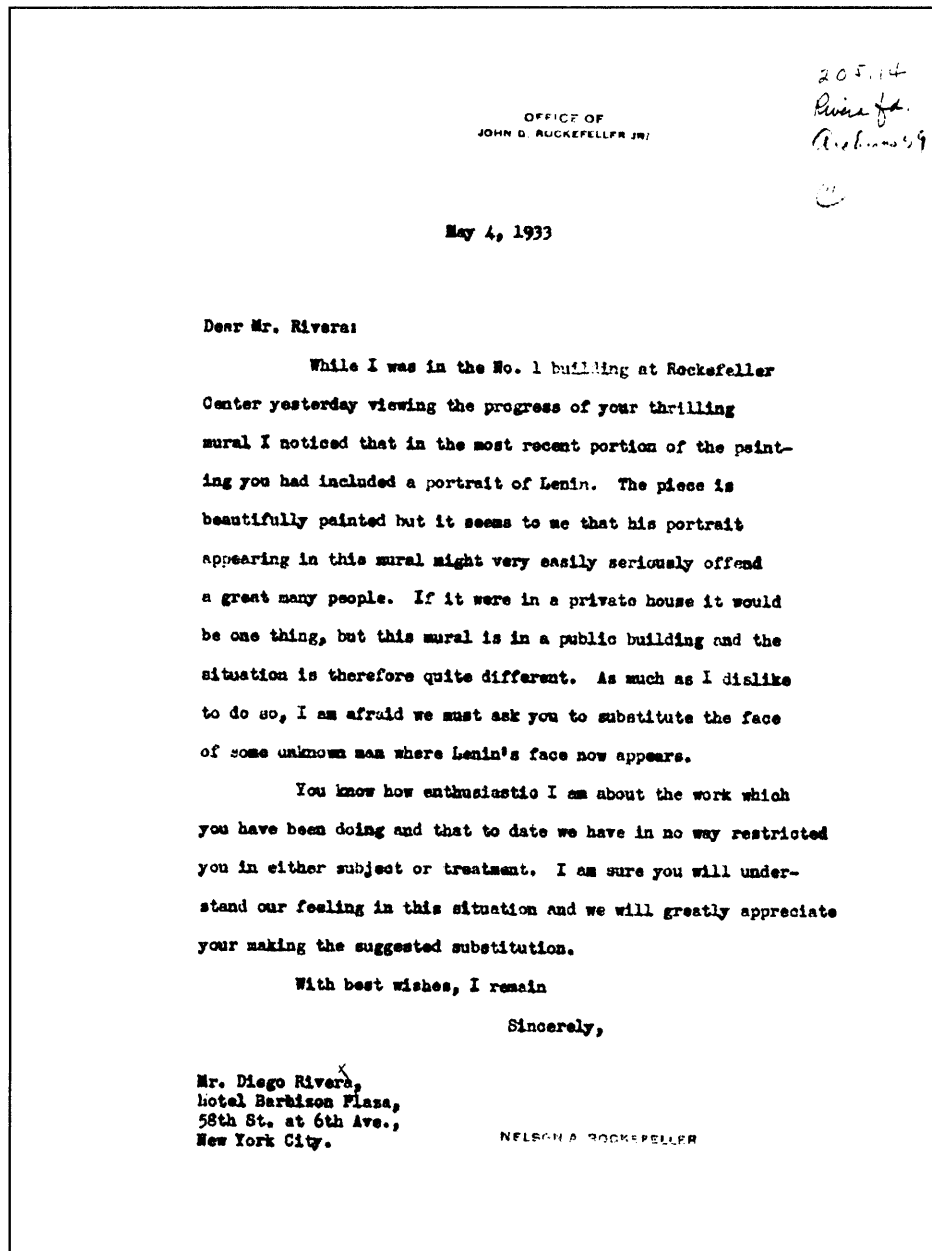


Fig. 32. Permission to photograph, Man Controller of the Universe Mural, Palacio de Bellas Artes


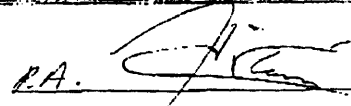
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PERMISO PARA FILMAR, GRABAR Y/O TOMAR FOTOGRAFÍAS																			
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<b>SOLICITA PERMISO PARA:</b>		REGISTRO FOTOGRÁFICO DEL MURAL "EL HOMBRE CONTROLADOR DEL Y DE VIDEO UNIVERSO"																	
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<b>EQUIPO:</b>		PROFESIONAL DE FOTOGRAFIA Y VIDEO																	
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		15		DE		ENERO		DEL		2007									
		MEXICO, D.F.																	
<b>IMPORTANTE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>El solicitante deberá entregar a esta Subdirección copia de la filmación en Betacam SP NTSC la grabación de audio en dat y/o las fotografías en cuestión.</li> <li>Queda prohibida la introducción y/o consumo de bebidas y alimentos en el interior del recinto.</li> <li>Se prohíbe alterar la iluminación y el sonido del recinto al filmar, grabar y/o tomar fotografías.</li> <li>El solicitante se compromete a no dañar el inmueble o la obra expuesta, por lo que de ser necesario cablear, éste deberá ir perfectamente adhiriendo al piso y/o muros del recinto con cinta gaffer, y al retirarla se asegurará de que no queden restos; se pide además tener especial cuidado con los contactos de AC.</li> <li>En caso de solicitar espacio de estacionamiento éste queda sujeto a disponibilidad de espacio y el solicitante se compromete a ocupar solo el número de cajones solicitados de acuerdo con los espacios dispuestos.</li> <li>En el caso específico del Palacio de Bellas Artes cuando las plateas sean compartidas, se pide respetar el espacio del medio (s) que asistirá a esa función.</li> <li>De no cumplir con estos requisitos, el personal solicitará que el responsable y su equipo se retiren del recinto.</li> <li>El solicitante se responsabiliza de los deterioros que genere en el recinto.</li> </ul>																			
<b>NOTA:</b>																			
 <b>DIRECCIÓN DE DIFUSIÓN Y RELACIONES PÚBLICAS</b>								 <b>SUBDIRECCIÓN DE DIFUSIÓN POR MEDIOS ELECTRÓNICOS</b>											

Fig. 33. Permission to publish images of Man Controller of the Universe Mural, Palacio de Bellas Artes

**BANCO DE MEXICO**

**Ref.: X14.DA.032.07**  
Ciudad de México, a 29 de enero de 2007.

**BENJAMIN WOOD**  
**GRADUATE STUDENT, VISUAL ARTS**  
Ashdown House  
305 Memorial Drive, Apt 102A  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
USA  
Phone: 415-515-8390  
E-mail: [benwood@mit.edu](mailto:benwood@mit.edu)  
Presente.

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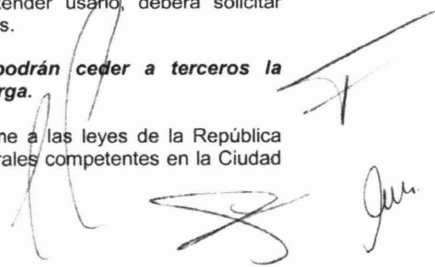
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La autorización mencionada se otorga conforme a las leyes de la República Mexicana y queda sujeta a las leyes y tribunales federales competentes en la Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal.





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For my grandparents  
Frank and Queenie Wood  
Henri and Ruth Phillips